November 2013

Salt

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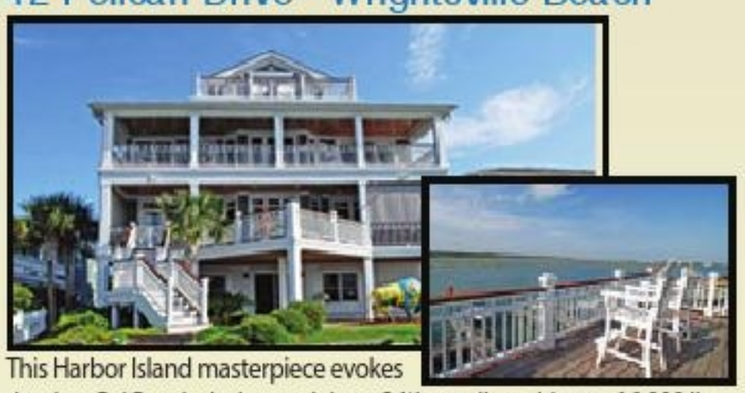

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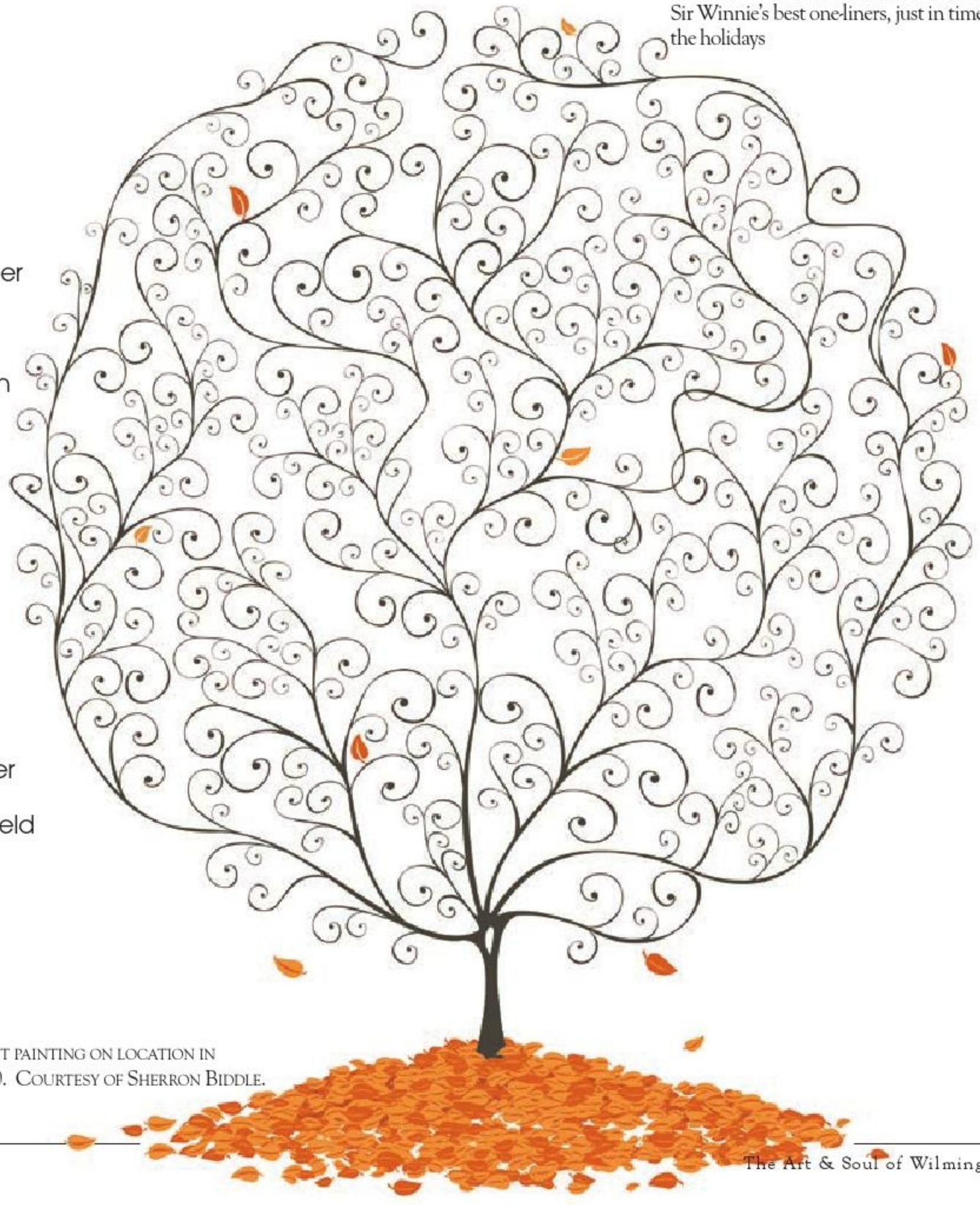

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$675,000

The Transcendental Month

By Jim Dodson

Some years ago on a speaking tour for a new book — a memoir detailing a summer my young daughter and old dog and I spent fly-fishing and camping our way around America — an interviewer for a national radio show asked me a surprisingly insightful question. The book's title was *Faithful Travelers.*

"Even if that weren't the title of the book," she said, "I found a lovely tone of spirituality running throughout your story. I wonder if you might tell us what particular religious tradition you come from? I couldn't quite put my finger on it, frankly, because it seemed to have so many different elements, even a touch of Eastern religions?"

She smiled. "Hope that doesn't offend you."

"Not at all," I said. "But it's kind of complicated."

"How so?"

I explained to her that I hail from a Southern family with two dominant Protestant branches, one Southern Baptist, the other Southern Methodist. The Methodists had the best covered dish suppers by a long shot, but the Baptists had the best hymns by a country mile. Both were in my DNA because my paternal great-great-grandfather was a circuit-riding Methodist preacher, my maternal Southern grandmother a Southern Baptist with firm ideas about education and Suffragette inclinations.

But this was only the beginning.

As a kid, my first reading books were Greek and Roman myths, stories of gods shaping the lives of mortal men.

My strong-willed West Virginia-born mother, however, came from the German Lutheran tradition, which explains why my older brother and I grew up attending the Lutheran church in Wilmington and later Greensboro. Most of my closest friends, however, were either Catholic or Jewish — though the Scout troops I attended were sponsored by a progressive Presbyterian church and a Quaker Friends meetinghouse. I was drawn to and influenced by the Scottish traditions of the Presbyterians and the Quaker belief in the soul's Inner Light.

In high school, through Bull Smith's English lit class, I discovered the transcendental writings of Emerson and Thoreau and found their message of the omniscient divine everywhere in nature and man a liberating thought. Emerson's fascination with the ancient religions of the East prompted me to read the *Bhagavad Gita* and the lovely *Upanishads* for the first time, the ancient Vedas of the Hindu faith. I was hooked on their poetry and power.

In college, on the other hand, I was drawn to the liturgy and language of the Episcopal Church and even toyed with the idea of taking myself off to seminary. But I was in love with a practicing Buddhist named Kristin I'd known since Catechism class who introduced me to the eight-fold path to awareness and a veritable choir of Eastern voices — Rumi and Hafiz, Islam's astonishing Persian poets, plus the Christian mystics Teresa of Avila and Thomas Merton.

In the end, I followed my father into journalism. But my secret "God thing," as Kristin called it, continued to grow and expand, reflected by titles in my ever-growing home library, where spiritual writings outstripped every genre save perhaps American history texts and poetry, prompting her to call me a "Southern-fried Transcendental who is trying to read his way to heaven."

In a way, she was right. Wherever I happened to be working as a journalist, I developed a habit of dropping into churches, temples and houses of worship of every sort just to see and hear what was going on.

In my travels over forty years, I also found peace by withdrawing from the madding crowds by wandering off into old cemeteries or sitting in empty cathedrals, enjoying the still quiet voice you can only hear when you clear away the noise and distractions.

When I built my house on a forested hilltop on the coast of Maine, I built gardens that led to woodland paths that in turn led to vernal pools and secret places where I could sit quietly deep in the bosom of nature — like an ancient Celtic pagan or the philosopher Plato, who believed that kindly spirits resided in groves of trees.

"In some ways," I admitted to my radio interviewer, "I'm probably unsuited for any single religion."

"So what would you actually call yourself?"

"I suppose I'm a Quaking Buddhepiscotarian with an strong fancy for a good Methodist covered dish supper and old-fashioned Baptist hymns, though lately I think I may really be a Southern-fried Transcendentalist."

She smiled.

"That's pretty funny — theologically speaking."

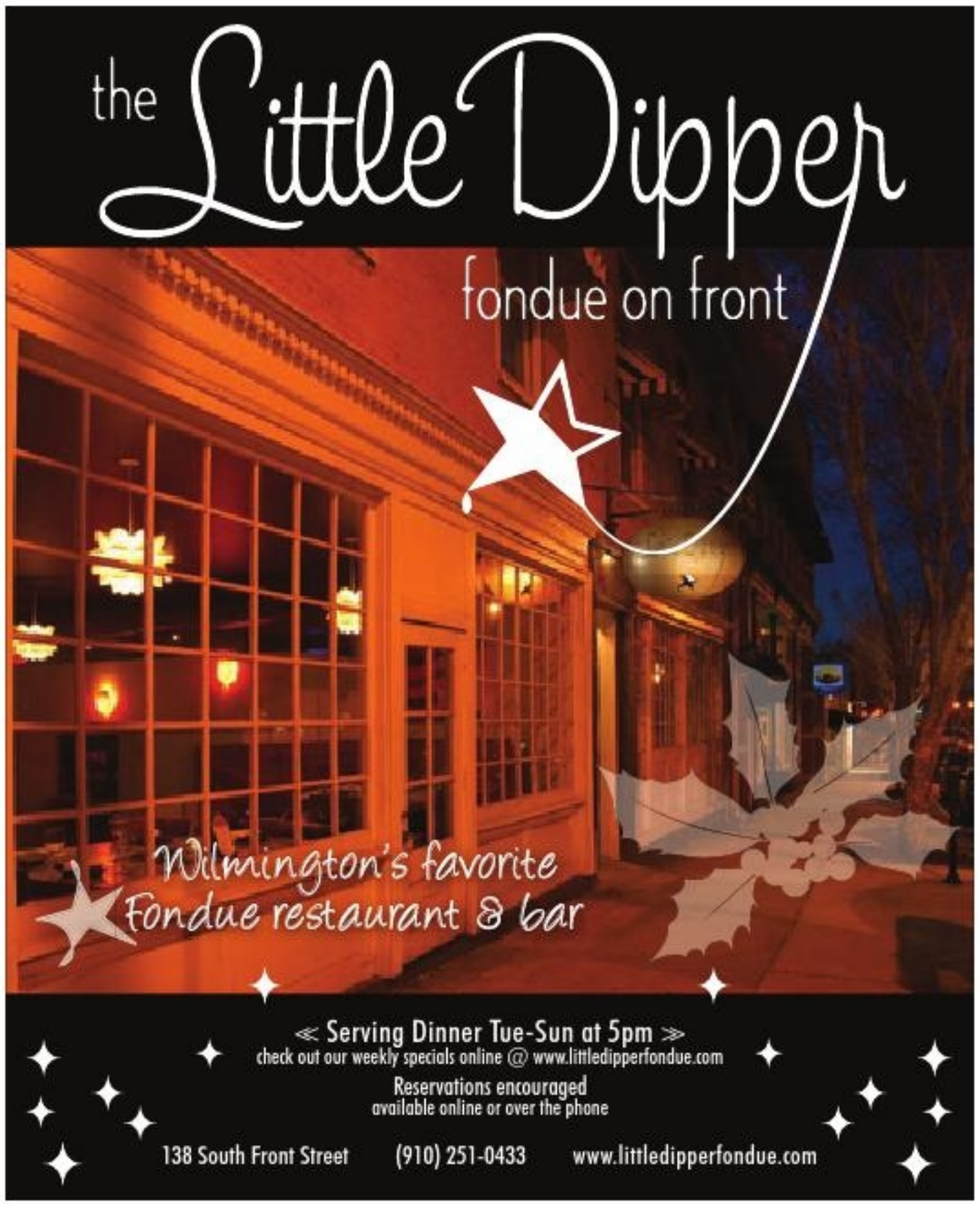
"The poet Hafiz said God has the ultimate sense of humor and loves a good joke. The word 'human' comes from the same root as 'humor,' after all."

She asked me if I believed in an afterlife — specifically in heaven.

I told her I hoped Saint Teresa of Avila was right that the way to heaven was heaven itself. Despite its joys and sorrows, that's how life felt to me — a spiritual pilgrimage to a better world. All religions, I pointed out, share this idea in some way or another.

"So what religious holidays do you observe?"

"All the above," I admitted with a laugh. "Though my favorite is Thanksgiving."



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Though it would probably cause my pioneer Methodist and Baptist forebears (and maybe a few of my modern Lutheran and Episcopalian friends as well) spiritual heartburn to hear, the older I get the more I'm convinced that the man-made barriers that divide people of faith — denominations and rigid doctrines that sharply articulate religious boundaries — mean far more to man than they do to God, whoever and whatever God happens to be. In a world where more information is conveyed in a single day's news cycle than all of man's previous time on this Earth, and thanks to mobile phones no one is — in theory — ever alone, the survivability of our religious traditions may well depend on the people of all faiths finding and nurturing the essential spiritual common ground of love without boundaries.

For reasons I'm at a loss to fully explain, these kinds of long thoughts always seem so much clearer to me come November, a month I've come to think of as the Transcendental Month because something about the clear light falling across harvested fields or through woods stripped bare of their leaves seems like a benediction to another year's sacred cycle of life, a bittersweet reminder of our own fragile impermanence. Whatever else is true, there is something holy in the knowledge that we are also just passing through, perhaps eventually transcending the temporal cares of both nature and man, perishable as any last rose of summer, like the tiny yellow ones that held on in my terrace garden all the way to Thanksgiving week last year.

Up in Maine, where the season closes quickly, I loved mowing my lawn for a final time, then draining and putting away the mower for the season, setting off to cover my tenderest perennial beds with salt straw and erect my ridiculous Rube Goldberg plant protectors, an effort against the coming snows. After this annual autumn ritual there wasn't much left for a Southern-fried Transcendental to do in November but work his wood pile, after which I would often plant myself on a peeling blue wooden bench in what I called my Philosopher's Garden — the highest point on my hilltop, a gentle bosom of thin soil cloistered by hemlocks, white spire birch and American beech — and read a bit of Emerson or Thoreau or the poetry of Robert Frost or simply watch the glory of late autumn fade through the trees. It was the light and the deep quiet that made November such a hallowed time on my hilltop.

Even now, years later, in a different phase of life, come the hallowed light of November, you're liable to find me out walking a country road or tromping through the woods in the company of my dogs, pottering around in my gone-by garden or sitting out on the terrace with coffee two hours before dawn admiring a starry sky and planets that seem to shine even brighter in the Transcendental Month.

Unable to pass an old cemetery with tilting stones, I'm all but guaranteed to pull over and go wandering for a bit, reading faded epitaphs and names, remembering souls who shared a walk through this transcendental veil.

If the church door is unlocked early, wherever I happen to be that day, Greensboro or Wilmington or somewhere on a distant road, following a pattern of behavior I'm too old to abandon now, I'm bound to slip in and sit for a spell in the clear morning light, hearing a fine sermon in the sweet silence — to paraphrase Emerson — even before the Thanksgiving service begins. When the music starts, I'll hope for "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," my favorite autumnal anthem, Isaac Watts' great hymn of remembrance that's still sung in rural churches and great cathedrals across the world, the middle stanza of which never fails to catch in my throat and reassure a wandering spiritual pilgrim.

A thousand ages in Thy sight,
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@saltmagazinenc.com

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THAT PERFECT WATERFRONT HOME, YOU NEED AN AGENT WHO'S NOT JUST GETTING HIS FEET WET.

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Lee Crouch as a young boy preparing for a sailboat race. Wrightsville Beach, circa 1962.

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SaltWorks

Winter Wonderland

The grand opening of the Cape Fear Festival of Trees, aka Party in the Pines, happens on Friday, November 22, from 6–9 p.m. at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street. Music, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, plus a chance to meet characters from the Wilmington School of Ballet's *The Nutcracker* amid a winter wonderland of holiday trees sponsored and decorated by local businesses and organizations. Trees on display through December 8. Party in the Pines tickets are $35 in advance, $45 at the door. Festival tickets: $12/adult; $8/group rate; $6/children. Proceeds from Tree sponsorships benefit Lower Cape Fear Hospice & LifeCareCenter; ticket sales benefit CAM. Welcome to Tinseltown, folks. Enjoy your stay. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

P.S. I Love You

Mail Call, a National Postal Museum exhibit that tells the story of military mail and communication from the American Revolution to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, opens at Cape Fear Museum on Saturday, November 9. Learn about the microfilm process developed to shrink the volume and weight of personal letters during World War II (Victory Mail), and experience poignant, heart-felt exchanges between the front line and the home front. Exhibit remains on display through January 20, Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., and Sunday from 1–5 p.m. Admission: $4–7. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearmuseum.com.

Have Art, Will Sell

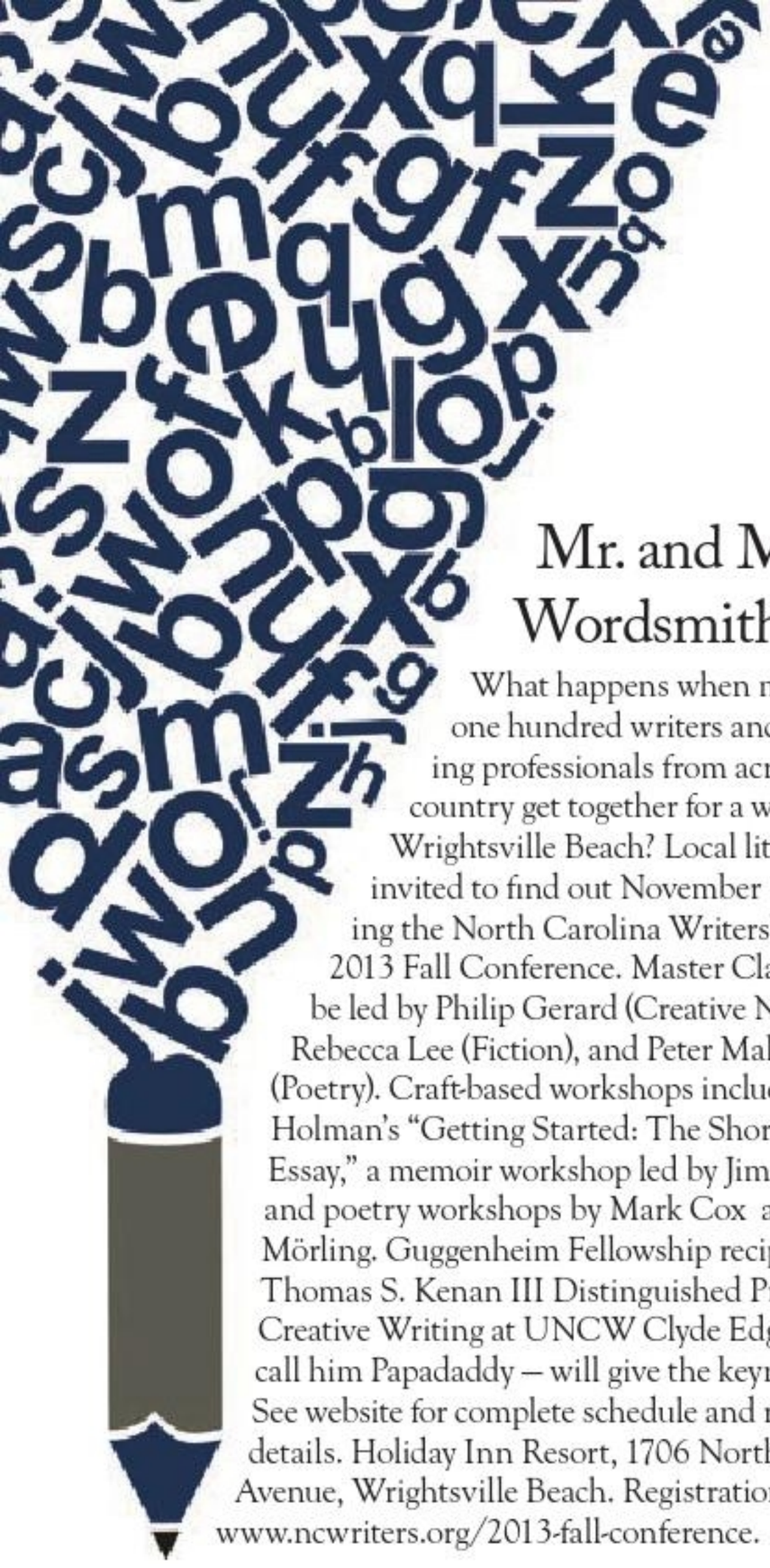
The Coastal Carolina Clay Guild's annual Holiday Show and Sale will open with a reception on Friday, November 1, from 5–7 p.m., with music provided by members of the Tallis Chamber Orchestra of Wilmington. Show and Sale continues November 2 and 3 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Hannah Block Community Arts Center, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Members from all over Southeastern North Carolina, including master potter Hiroshi Sueyoshi, will exhibit and sell their work; each participating artist will donate one of their wares for a raffle to benefit Empty Bowls. Free admission. Info: www.coastalcarolinaclayguild.org.

Paint the Town Red

Join the Arts Council of Wilmington for a grand reception of the arts – and a bird's eye view of the Port City – on Saturday, November 23, at the Union Station Building on CFCC's campus. From 7–10 p.m., local performance artists will dazzle, hors d'oeuvres and cocktails will be served, and a silent auction featuring exquisite local artwork will keep the room buzzing. Tickets: $75. The Cape Fear Room, Union Station Building, Cape Fear Community College, 502 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

Take it to the Bank

Street Turkeys of Wilmington, a holiday food drive designed to help restock the shelves of nearly one hundred area food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens and group homes, will be held on Wednesday, November 27 (the day before Thanksgiving). To help feed the hungry this holiday season, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina needs frozen turkeys and hams, and an array of canned items, including stews, soups, fruits and vegetables. Items can be dropped off at The Landing in Wrightsville Beach (530 Causeway Drive) from 7 a.m. – 5 p.m., and at the Harris Teeters at Lumina Commons (1940 Eastwood Road, Wilmington), Long Leaf Mall (2800 South College Road, Wilmington) and Oak Landing Shopping Center (8260 Market Street, Porter's Neck) from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. For an extensive list of accepted items, including infant formula, diapers and wipes, visit www.streetturkeyswilmington.org, where you can also make online donations.



Mr. and Mrs. Wordsmith

What happens when more than one hundred writers and publishing professionals from across the country get together for a weekend in Wrightsville Beach? Local literati are invited to find out November 15–17 during the North Carolina Writers' Network 2013 Fall Conference. Master Classes will be led by Philip Gerard (Creative Nonfiction), Rebecca Lee (Fiction), and Peter Makuck (Poetry). Craft-based workshops include Virginia Holman's "Getting Started: The Short Personal Essay," a memoir workshop led by Jim Dodson, and poetry workshops by Mark Cox and Malena Mörling. Guggenheim Fellowship recipient and Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW Clyde Edgerton — we call him Papadaddy — will give the keynote address. See website for complete schedule and registration details. Holiday Inn Resort, 1706 North Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach. Registration: www.ncwriters.org/2013-fall-conference.

Velveteen Madness

In early 2011, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the release of David Lynch's cult classic, *Blue Velvet*, a team of local talent began crafting a theatrical version of the film that they consider to be wildly under-appreciated, especially since it was shot here in Wilmington. November 8 and 9, at 7 p.m., *Blue Velvet the Musical* will be performed at ThearNOW (19 South Tenth Street) during a four-course tasting meal inspired by locations and characters from the movie. Show features original music by Bryan Putnam, and Denice Hopper — who else? — as acting musical director. The bar, of course, will be stocked with Heinie and PBR. Tickets: $45. Proceeds go toward the development and production of this work-in-progress. Info: (910) 399-3669; www.bluevelvetmusical.com; www.theatrewilmington.com.

A Night to Remember

On Friday, November 22, 7–9 p.m. at the Odell Williamson Auditorium (150 College Road, Bolivia), the 18th Annual Candlelight Memorial Service Honoring Victims of Crime will take place. This event is sponsored by the Family Homicide Support Group, a state-wide organization, to honor and remember our fellow citizens who have died because of homicide, domestic violence, drunk driving, felony and misdemeanor death by motor vehicle. The support group in our area was started by Birdie Frink twenty years ago and includes many members from the law enforcement community, who recognize the need for continuing support of those who have suffered from violent crime. There will be similar memorial services scattered across the state. All are welcome to attend. Info: (910) 755-7416.

Love in the Dark

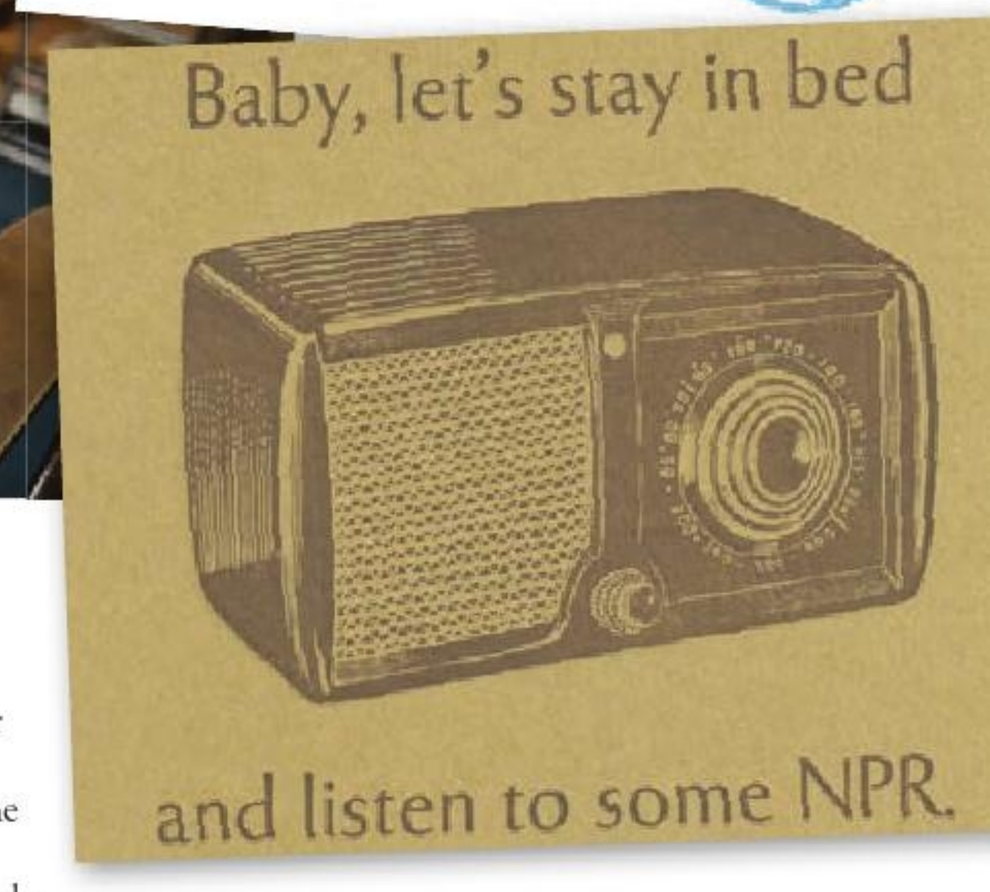
As if Airlie Gardens weren't enchanted enough — its ancient oaks wear moss garland year-round — this spectacular display of lights there ought to spellbind. Beginning Friday, November 29, guests will experience Enchanted Airlie, a half-mile cruise through the festive gardens. Hot beverages will be available for purchase, and, if you've been good, you just might get a wink and a smile from Santa. Tours run from 5–7 p.m. and 7–9 p.m., Thursday through Saturday through December 21, plus Wednesday, December 18 and Sunday, December 22. Admission: $10–22. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

Market on the Calendar

The Cape Fear Academy Holiday Market, which takes place on the school's campus at 3900 South College Road, features nearly 60 vendors and more than 12,000 square feet of jewelry, home décor, gift items, clothing, accessories, children's items, baked goods and other holiday must-haves. Market will be held on Friday, November 15, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday, November 16, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission: $5. Serious shoppers (and sippers!) won't want to miss the "sip and shop" preview party on Thursday, November 14, from 6–8 p.m. Preview tickets, which grant free admission on Friday or Saturday, are $25 in advance, $30 at the door. Info: www.capefearacademy.org/2013-holiday-market.

High-Flying Greetings

At Lady Press Letterpress, a vintage printing and a plucky poet revive the art of sending the perfect thoughts



By Ashley Wahl

Once upon a time, there was a pretty lady poet named Emily Wismer who fell in love with a time machine. This particular time machine was a greasy tabletop Pilot press made before the First World War. The moment she saw it, her heart skipped a beat. The reason, our quirky heroine would soon discover, was that printer's ink pumped through her veins.

Imagine how Amelia Earhart felt when she saw her first plane and have some idea how Emily Wisner felt when she found her Pilot. It was love at first flight.

***

Not one mile from the sunbathing alligators of Greenfield Lake, Lady Pilot Letterpress prints the kind of greeting cards you might expect to receive from your trendiest friend — or possibly that cool aunt with the nose ring who never did have any children. Take the vintage image of a tandem bicycle, for example, paired with offbeat, modern-day expressions:

"C'mon lady, move it!" says the Edwardian hipster pedaling behind the knockout in the high-collar blouse. Her stone-faced reply: "Tailgating bastard!"

Or, three smiling hot dogs, dressed in buns and straw boater hats, dancing beneath the words "franks a lot!"

Notes for tree-huggers ("My love for you is organic and cruelty-free"), public radio nerds ("Baby, let's stay in bed and listen to some NPR"), and fans of black humor ("I just wanna punch you with gratitude") — all created by a poet-turned-printer who finds content in the rhythmic clanking of her 1907 Chandler and Price letterpress.

"I love these old machines," says Emily, 41, breaking for a moment after thrusting down the cumbersome hand lever of an antique paper cutter. "They're so pretty."

Plus, the wordsmith admits, the arduous labor makes her feel connected to literary history.

***

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

Emily studied English and poetry at the University of Michigan, taught 8-year-olds in the Chicago Public Schools, then began volunteering at a print shop called Bad Dog with her (now) ex-husband. When she moved to Asheville in her late thirties, she became an apprentice and eventually manager of a successful letterpress called Blue Barnhouse, from which her business was born.

Two years ago, Emily (aka Lady Pilot) and Blue Barnhouse moved their production venue (aka thousands of pounds of metal) to a space on Sixteenth Street in Wilmington. Lady Pilot recently relocated to an independent storefront at 1919 Carolina Beach Road. Although you can peek through the windows, this is not a retail space. Here, Emily's retro-inspired designs come to life.

She holds up a card with an illustration by her artist friends: mad scientist Nikola Tesla holding an induction coil. "You electrify me."

Lady Pilot Letterpress greeting cards are sold online, and found in hundreds of shops across the country, plus venues in Hong Kong and the UK. Find them locally at Edge or Urge boutique downtown.

***

Back in August, just before Lady Pilot's grand opening at its current location, Emily got an email from her brother's friend Scooter, who discovered one of her greeting cards on a recent jaunt in New York.

"I was in the big city the other day (59th Street and Columbus Circle) getting on the A train after a softball game in Central Park," writes Scooter. "I saw something on the ground and noticed the drawing . . . so I picked it up."

The image — could it be Lady Pilot? — is certainly eye-catching: a female sprawled seductively across the surface of an oversized hardback. "Wanna come over, and you know . . . read a book?"

Inside, a love note from a boy named Joshua to a girl named Elissa:

Always remember that you are my EVERYTHING. My true love, my PASSION and my partner. I love you so much.

"It's good to get little reminders," says the artist. "People are using these cards to say things to each other."

Lady Pilot will offer a holiday card printing class on Sunday, December 8, and more printing classes in 2014. Information: (828) 279-5723.

Front Street may be home base, but senior editor Ashley Wahl is prone to wander.

Reborn in a Barn

Once the cream of Port City theater experiences, Red Barn Studio Theatre returns to life

Lance Howell, the technical director for the Thalian Association

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

By Gwenyfar Rohler

If the 50th anniversary is "Gold" and the 60th is "Diamond," based on Thalian Association's experience, apparently the 225th is "Barn." The Red Barn Studio Theatre, to be precise. Slumbering quietly on the corner of South Third and Marstellar streets, the Red Barn has been dark and empty since Linda Lavin and Steve Bakunas moved out of the area at the beginning of the year. This is not so much a story of a theater group in search of a home as it is a story about a theater in search of a family to bring it back to life.

The Red Barn was created by Tony Award-winning actress Linda Lavin and her husband, the talented designer Steve Bakunas, as the final stage in their ambitious revitalization project on Marstellar Street that included renovating five houses on the block and donating a park to the neighborhood. From 2007 to 2012, the intimate venue showcased the cream of Port City talent. But since mid-October of 2012 it has sat vacant. No actors rehearsing, no carpenters backstage building sets, and no audience antsy in their seats with anticipation. It's the theater equivalent of a forgotten doll, languishing for a child's withdrawn love.

Ten blocks away, in the Community Arts Center on the corner of Second and Orange streets, Thalian Association was celebrating its 225th anniversary. Founded in 1788, when the American Revolution was still a real memory in people's minds, Thalian Association has been through a few incarnations on the road to becoming North Carolina's official community theater. "We've had periods when we went dark. The Civil War, during Reconstruction, and the early 1990s," concedes Susan Habas, managing director of Thalian Association. "But if you look through Thalian's records, the same family names come up over and over again, showing continuity for Thalians." Habas points to one of our most prominent family names, which figures heavily into the story.

Many people in town confuse Thalian Hall and Thalian Association. They share the same name, but have not been synonymous for quite a while.

The Association had a perpetual lease on Thalian Hall when it opened in 1858, but by 1860, the opulent theater had already exhausted the resources of the small theater group. The then-Thalian Association President Donald MacRae signed full ownership of the building to the city of Wilmington, which was accepted by the mayor of the city, Donald's brother, John MacRae, on June 21, 1860. Habas points out that that legacy continues into the modern era. Thalian Association in its current incarnation reorganized in 1929 after a lapse, and in 1930, Mrs. Hugh MacRae became president of the Thalians, the granddaughter-in-law to Donald MacRae. Her successor was Robert Cowan DeRosset, the grandson of old Thalian supporter, Robert H. Cowan.

"This community has embraced the cultural arts, performing arts and arts education since the very beginning," Habas says. "We are so proud to carry that legacy forward." When it comes to arts advocacy and the preservation of tradition, Thalian's management of the Hannah Block Historic USO Community Arts Center for the last two decades is evidence of a dedication to the legacy they have inherited.

So if you happen to have a theater that needs love, care and devotion, Thalian Association has a track record of providing TLC to a historic building and fostering artistic achievement there.

Lavin and Bakunas offered the Thalians a three-year rent-free lease on the property and the use of the brand new $20,000 lighting system that had been purchased for the Red Barn and packed up when the fate of the theater was in the air. When I visited at the beginning of September, new risers were being built in the fifty-seat audience area and chairs had been delivered. "Lance Howell's TACT Academy classes, 'Getting Technical' and 'Stage Craft,' are going to be held here," says Habas, grinning with anticipation. Her smile is so evocative that I can almost hear children laughing. The major purpose for the Red Barn seems to be to expand the Children's Theatre offerings of the TACT Academy classes and TACT Showcase, plus five musicals TACT produces a year. Habas looks off in the distance. "Steve and Linda have left the magic of fabulous theater in here," she says. "You can almost feel it in the walls."

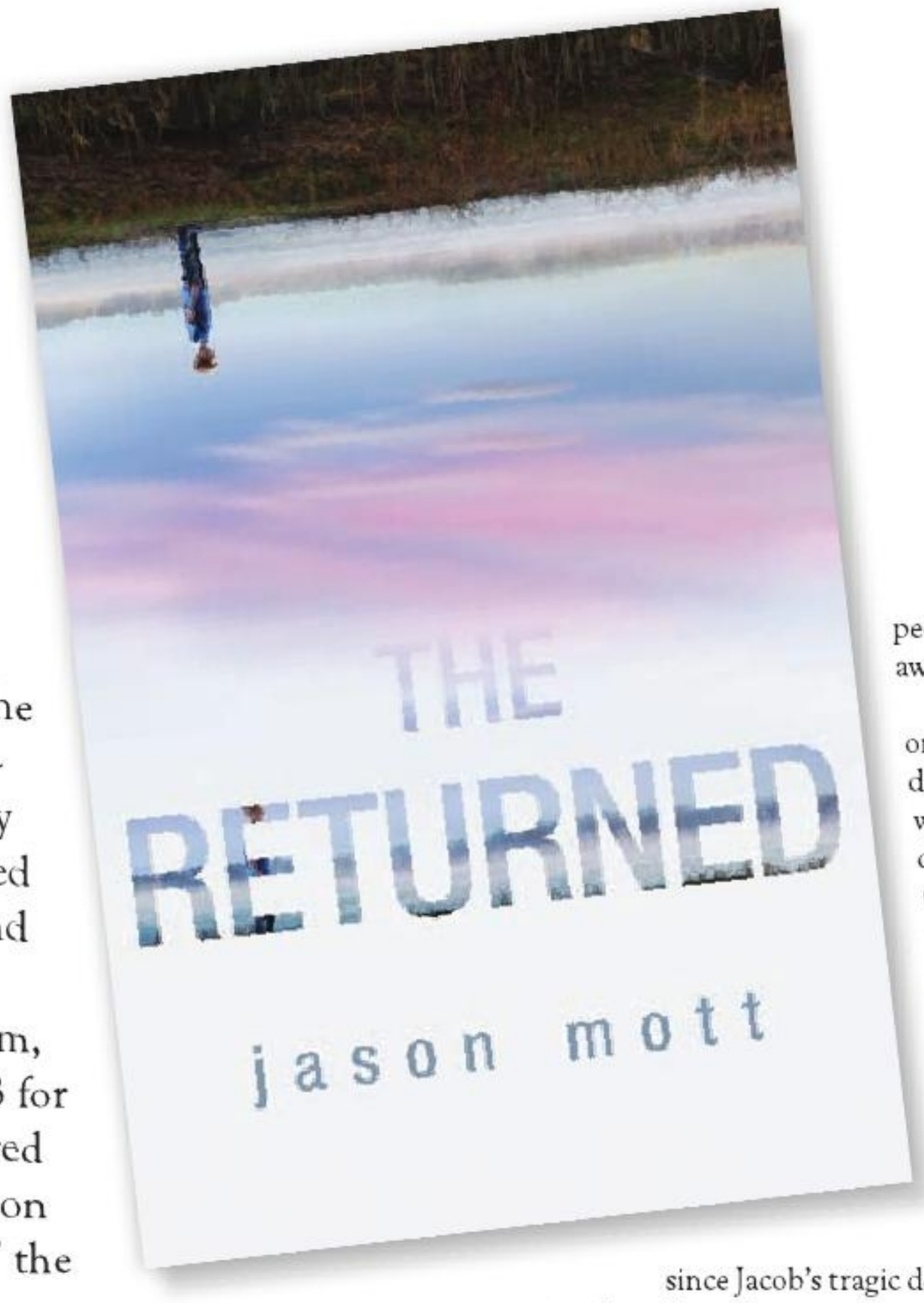
In the 1990s, Thalian Association produced a summer season of smaller shows in the Studio Theater of Thalian Hall. The summer shows would typically be straight plays aimed at smaller audiences in contrast to the big musicals Thalian produced on the main stage. Tennessee Williams, Neil Simon, and Arthur Miller would be typical fare. "Yes," Habas confirms, "we have plans to bring that back and produce a smaller summer season here." On November 1, the Red Barn will present *Other Desert Cities* as its inaugural show — the perfect symbol for the newly reopened Red Barn. After all, Linda Lavin was in the original Off-Broadway cast of the show in 2011. It sort of brings the legacy of Lavin and Bakunas into the present with Thalian Association as they join hands to walk into the future.

Other Desert Cities plays Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 1–24, 2013, at The Red Barn Studio Theatre, corner of Third and Marstellar streets.

Gwenyfar Rohler fell in love with theater at Thalian Hall on her sixth birthday. She spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

Loves Lost

The blessing – and startling discomfiture – of a returning soul



By Stephen E. Smith

An old edition of the college history text *The American Experience* relates the story of a religious zealot who walked into a New England village and proclaimed that he was Jesus. The local Puritans grabbed him, branded his forehead with a B for blasphemy, tarred and feathered him and ran him out of town on a rail – "thus demonstrating," the authors wrote, "what would have happened to Christ had he actually returned."

Such is the premise behind Jason Mott's first novel, *The Returned*. But it's not Jesus who's resurrected; it's the dead, en masse. And they appear all over the planet without any particular rhyme or reason. The Puritan village in Mott's novel is Arcadia, a town of 600 souls located in southeastern North Carolina, where Harold and Lucille Hargrave, down-home, right-thinking folk, answer a knock at their front door and discover, to their astonishment, a "government man" holding the hand of the living and breathing – and blameless – embodiment of their 8-year-old son, Jacob, who'd drowned in 1966.

Some reader will no doubt suspect that Mott's novel is a silly zombie thriller, another plotless horror story about the putrefied dead pursuing the living ad nauseum. Readers who are more attuned to the uses of fiction may suspect the novel is a parable or allegory for the troubled times in which we live – big government intruding into the lonely, thwarted lives of ordinary people who long for a genuine spiritual awakening. Neither assumption is correct.

The premise is straightforward: Jacob is one of thousands – probably millions – of dead human beings who return to the world of the living, bringing with them the disruptions such an event would entail. On a subliminal level, their reappearance plays on the guilt we experience when a loved one dies and we find ourselves overcome with a need to commune with them. What would we do differently if we were granted a second chance to interact with the loved and lost?

For Lucille and Harold, both in their 70s, Jacob's return is a blessing – and a startling discomfiture. In the decades since Jacob's tragic death, the Hargraves have settled into a routine that allows them to cope with his absence. Now they must live in the world as it might have been and as it will be. Jacob, on the other hand, has no memory of having drowned and doesn't know why he's returned. He simply begins where he left off and hurries into the kitchen to catch up on all the eating he's missed. ". . . there was the sound of Jacob sitting at the kitchen table, gulping down his lemonade and burping with great satisfaction. 'Excuse me,' the boy yelled."

How is it possible for the dead to walk the Earth again? Are these beings truly lost loved ones come back to life or are they sinister apparitions? Does their appearance signal the beginning of the end times? How does their intrusion affect belief in an afterlife? If the answers to these obvious questions are not contained in the novel, Mott does manage to touch on every human emotion – sadness, happiness, anger, disgust, compassion, rage, guilt and especially bigotry and fear, which are, finally, the overriding motivations for the actions taken by the True Living.

As might be expected, religious belief comes into question. When the Hargraves first hear of the Returned, Lucille refers to them as the "devil,"

but when Jacob steps back into her life, she immediately resumes her duties as a loving mother. Harold isn't so quick to accept this incarnation of his son, and he fumbles to comprehend what is essentially an unfathomable mystery. In his pocket he finds an old cross he's carried since Jacob's death, the words "God Loves You" worn from grief so that only the "O" and "Y" remain (a trifle obvious, perhaps). When Jacob, Lucille and Harold attend church for a town meeting, Pastor Robert Peters, a man caught up in his own dilemmas, both personal and spiritual, reacts awkwardly. "He took Jacob's hand, being sure that even those in the back of the church, those who could not see, had time enough to be told what he was doing, how he was speaking of patience as he held the hand of the boy who had been dead for a half century and who was now, suddenly, peacefully sucking candy in front of the church, in the very shadow of the cross."

The Returned present an overwhelming challenge to the government, and Martin Bellamy, the bureaucrat who delivers Jacob to his parents, immediately sets about filling out the requisite forms. "Of course, even for people returning from the dead, there was paperwork." When these mysterious beings begin to accumulate in excessive numbers, the government attempts to confine them in concentration camps, one of which is located in Arcadia. Soldiers are brought in to guard the Returned and to protect them from the True Living movement whose ultimate aim is to kill these innocent beings. Harold has himself interned with his son and takes responsibility for the child's well being, while Lucille remains at home, preparing their meals and plotting to set them free.

The novel concludes with an "Author's Note" that explains how *The Returned* came to be written and supplies, albeit unnecessarily, Mott's motivation for writing the novel. "In July 2010, a couple of weeks after the anniversary of my mother's death, I dreamed of her. The dream was a simple one: I came home from work and she was there, at the dinner table waiting for me . . . [It was] an opportunity to see her smile, to hear her voice, a chance to stay with her in those last days of her life, rather than hide from her the way I did in the real world." Guilt is powerful stuff.

The Returned is a strong first outing — the novel has already been picked up for a TV series — and if readers are left with more questions than answers, the story's innate appeal and thematic resonance far outweigh any technical deficiencies.

Stephen E. Smith's most recent book of poems is A Short Report on the Fire at Woolworths. *He can be reached at travisses@hotmail.com.*

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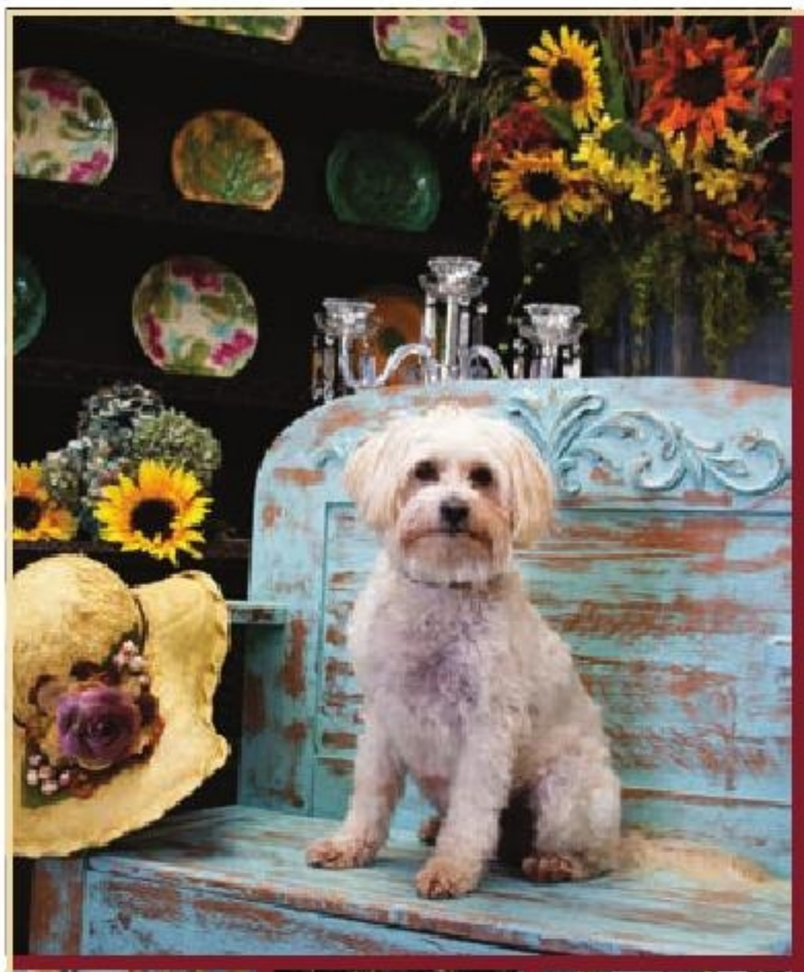

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Good Company

Singer-songwriter Jesse Stockton's Moonlight Company hits all the right notes

By Jamie Lynn Miller

Singer-songwriter Jesse Stockton appreciates life. Even his Facebook posts applaud its simple pleasures — from his daughter's joy at Jungle Rapids, to the open smile on the face of a little girl who's blind. With his recent solo release, *Thank You Very Kindly*, a sophomore album, and a new baby on the way, Jesse's attitude of gratitude informs his music with heartfelt lyrics and a pure, soulful sound.

And yet, he's had moments of doubt. "Sometimes I'll play at a place like Buffalo Wild Wings . . . toddlers rolling around, throwing mulch into the air . . . and I'll totally break down in my head and say, 'What are you doing? This is ridiculous. Go get a job,'" says the singer, recalling some less-illustrious gigs.

"And then I play somewhere like The Depot in Hillsborough," he says, and his spirit is revived. "Yes. This is what I'm supposed to be doing with my life.'"

His fans agree.

For those past mulch-throwing age, to hear Jesse Stockton perform is to witness someone doing what he's been put on this Earth to do.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

***

I first met Jesse — as a civilian, not a musician — on Castle Street during a grass-roots effort to paint the walls of the recently opened Gravity Records. We were dousing the store with a vibrant sky blue, and soon-to-be-married Mr. and Mrs. Stockton were my "banter in-between brush strokes" partners. Months later, I heard Jesse open for the accomplished Americana outfit James Justin & Co. at Reggie's 42nd Street Tavern. He gracefully thanked the audience, then made way for the headliners. The energy of his own set seemed to linger in the air.

My next Stockton show was intentional. Last August, I managed to corral him and new music partner Philip Stokes to my grass-roots recording studio, where I produce a biweekly music-intensive podcast called Sonic Byways.

***

We gather in the warehouse chambers of downtown's Art Factory on Surry Street, around a mixer, two mics and a laptop. Overhead fans spin in tired circles but offer little relief from the humid air. The guys take their shirts off. "I prefer it this way," says Stockton, with a nod to the heat. "We're both from North Carolina, around Winston-Salem and Matthews . . . the hotter, the better."

After a long stint of solo work, Stockton tells me, he was looking for a music partner. Did he ever consider posting come-jam-with-me fliers at local coffee shops?

"You know, I've contemplated it," he says, with a chuckle, "but with the amount of weirdos I've met just trying to sell a dryer on Craigslist . . ."

And so he recruited Stokes, a friend and accomplished guitar player, to play bass. Never mind that Stokes didn't play bass. He would figure it out. Two days later, the Fourth of July, they played their very first gig.

"It was awesome," says Stockton.

And their duo (with guest appearances), Moonlight Company, was born.

Currently at No. 2 on ReverbNation's Americana charts, Stockton's sound is getting noticed. Think Townes Van Zandt and Doc Watson, with a blast of coastal Carolina sunshine. But when asked to define Moonlight Company's sound, he pauses. "That's one of the hardest questions to answer. There's mandolin, guitar, banjo, bass . . ."

". . . We're from the South," adds Stokes. "[Our music] is always gonna have that sort of Southern twang."

"Sometimes it'll be soft and gentle and beautiful," says Stockton, "sometimes it'll be with a screaming rock 'n' roll voice."

Talk turns to the Wilmington music scene and the preponderance of Ultimate Cover Bands throughout the summer, and covers bands in general, which seem a safe bet for area clubs. Original local music does exist, we agree, but one has to dig for it. And keep digging. Between venues like Goat and Compass, Ted's on the River, Satellite Bar and Lounge, and Duck and Dive, home to one of Moonlight Company's weekly gigs, live music is found nearly seven nights a week. But original work is a precious commodity.

Stockton has a solid set list of personally penned songs, with lyrics that deal with a myriad of topics: love, mischief, life experience beyond — and because of — a rigid, ultra-conservative upbringing.

"My parents were super-Southern Baptist," he says, admitting that many of his opinions, life-views and rebellions are provoked by "those two people." Of course this influences his music. In "Wedding Day," we hear about Dad's conspicuous absence at the June ceremony, while "Sinner" amplifies Stockton's head-turning vocals: *Like a bird seeking shelter, waltzing in helter skelter . . . you were on my mind.*

But like all good bands, the guys keep a couple of blistering covers in their crowd-pleasing arsenal; and not the usual suspects. "We do 'Bad Bitch' from Ween. And 'Psycho Killer,'" says Stockton. "But [our] version's a little more sped up, in a bluegrass kind of way." Frenetic, psycho-killer bluegrass, with a little bit of country in the mix. "Oh, it's always gonna have country in it," he proclaims. "I can't help that."

Today's music interlude is duly enhanced by the rich acoustics of the Art Factory sound stage. Stokes hangs his head over his guitar, resting his arm lightly across the sound hole. The opening chords of Neil Young's "Harvest Moon" causes their listener to smile, and Stockton's vocal rendition ultimately makes the song his own. It's rhythmically different than the original. Twangier. More stripped-down. Stockton's "Harvest Moon" is blue, and warm — and in the way that good music does, it reflects something in all of us.

To hear complete interview — with musical interlude, visit Sonic Byways with Jamie Lynn at jamielynn.podbean.com and look for "The Topless Episode: Jesse Stockton and Philip Stokes." For all Jesse, all the time: www.jessestocktonband.com.

Jamie Lynn Miller is a writer, rock climber and radio host from Aspen, Colorado. While pursuing her MFA in creative writing at UNCW, she's trading ski wax for surf wax.

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The Way We Were

When living well was more than enough

By Ann Ipock

Tomorrow is my birthday, so, naturally, I've been thinking a lot about my early years. I remember the clouds of chalk dust at Northwoods Elementary School, how the cafeteria served those delicious, heavenly yeast rolls, and the lingering odor of the busy mimeograph machine. I loved how the ink looked purple.

The good old days are so much more than a cliché for me. They're part of my DNA. In the 50s and 60s, my siblings and I spent most of our time outdoors. We only came inside for three reasons: to eat, sleep, or go to the bathroom. We played ball in the street until Dad whistled for us to come home, dusk always coinciding. We ran behind the mosquito truck. We chased the ice cream truck. We built forts. We draped bedspreads over clotheslines and — vôilá! — had a theater for our own backyard shows. We caught lightning bugs and placed them inside jars with holes punched through the lids. We played ball-and-jacks and hopscotch, and we played with our Barbie dolls beneath a weeping willow. We rode our bikes to the drugstore and ordered vanilla Cokes. I started a diary. And I attached anything and everything to my enormous bulletin board: gum wrapper chains, pom-poms, county fair tickets, ballgame programs, drawings, pen pal envelopes.

Of course, we didn't have cell phones. We had one black rotary dial phone and a party line. Our phone number consisted of only four digits. A prefix would come later, then an area code. Our phone had a distinctive ring, different from the way our neighbors' phones sounded. And if you were naughty, you could listen in on their conversations in hopes of hearing juicy gossip. Most likely, though, it was boring stuff. "Why, Blanche, just add a tablespoon of water for fluffier scrambled eggs." I recorded that in my diary for some reason. For the record, the speaker was right. I hope Blanche took her advice.

We had a Magnavox black and white television with three channels: ABC, NBC and CBS. In 1962, we got air-conditioning, which was paramount to moving into a new home — ahhhhhh, cool relief from the 90-something-degree days. But we still weren't allowed to stay inside if the sun was shining. Like many kids, we had cheerleading practice, ball practice and school club meetings; and I learned how to dance the bop (we call it shag now) from my older sisters. My diary became my best friend, as I rambled on about various people and events, and tapped into teenage angst.

Our family didn't have a lot of money. Nevertheless, my parents enjoyed an active social life. They played bridge, went dancing, and were active members of various clubs, including the Jaycees and the Jaycettes. Mama was in the Sewing Club, although they didn't do much sewing. Instead, they hosted the much-anticipated, annual Sewing Club formal dance. Mama listened to "Bali Hai" on our stereo, and she was always reading — *Reader's Digest* condensed books, mostly. She sewed all the clothes my sisters and I owned; with one pattern she could create ten outfits. On Easter Sunday, we wore frilly dresses, Easter bonnets and, since my parents owned The Bootery shoe store, white patent leather Stride Rite shoes. Mama also sewed Barbie doll clothes, crocheted afghans, and canned food in the summer.

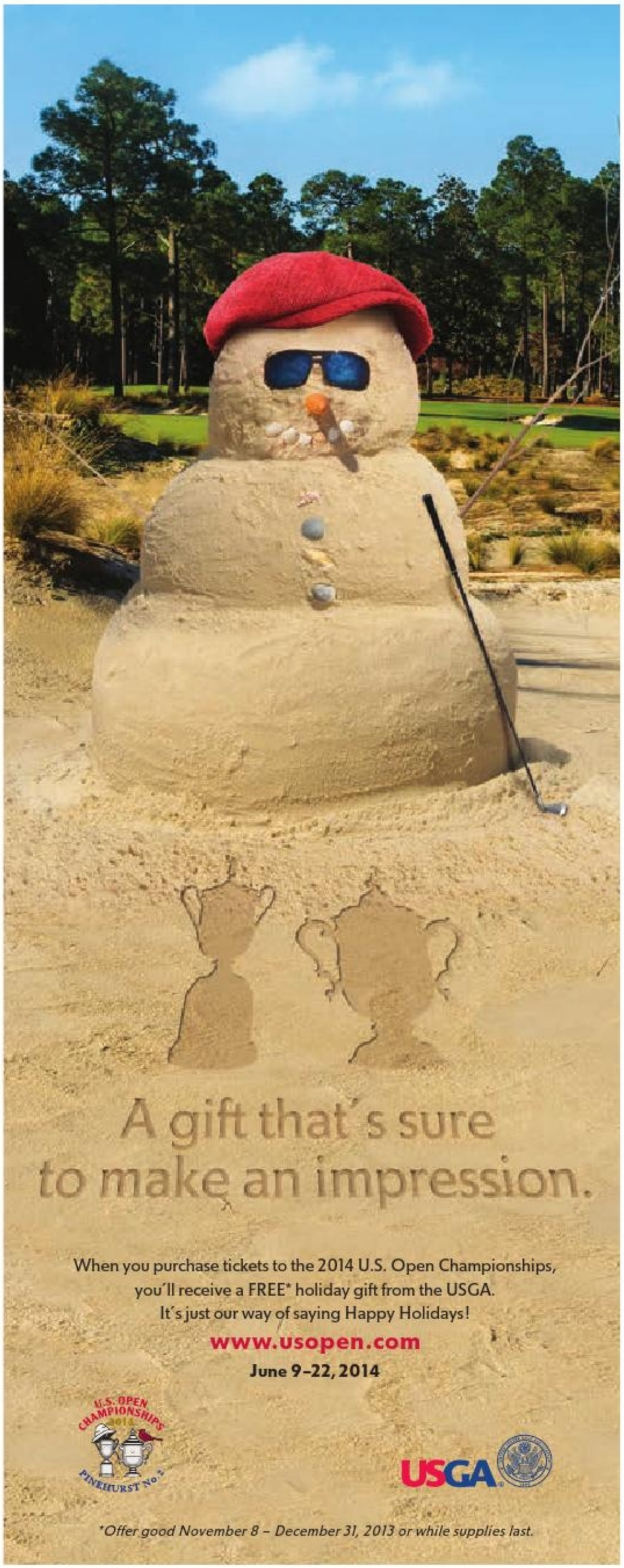
Dad worked six days a week. On Sunday, we either visited my grandparents in New Bern or we went out on the boat while Dad went scuba diving. Oh, how I loved rolling down those huge sand dunes, our teal 1963 Pontiac parked nearby, almost as long as our boat. Dad filled tanks for divers with his backyard compressor and made weight belts. The high school boys who came to our house thought Dad was cool. I thought they were cool. My diary knew all about them.

Dad constantly inspired outdoor fun. He made tire swings, wooden surfboards and go-karts, and, when the place next to Putt-Putt went out of business, he brought a trampoline home.

In 1964, my parents bought a waterfront lot in Bear Creek (near Swansboro) and a rudimentary Jim Walter home that they moved there. My uncle built a concrete shell below which served as our basement. At our weekend cabin we learned to fish, clam, sail and water-ski — the latter, I recorded in my diary. On my first attempt, I circled successfully four times before letting go of the rope, feeling ecstatic and smiling wildly — until I tried to walk up the hill with excruciating leg pain, my calf muscles twitching and spasming.

I used to say we didn't grow up with a lot. As I pause and think about it, we had way more than enough.

Ann Ipock is an award-winning Southern author, humorist and speaker whose books include the Life is Short *series. She may be reached at amipock@ec.rr.com.*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The Perfect Martini

Which is better – shaken or stirred? Actually, both

By Frank Daniels III

"When I'm . . . er . . . concentrating," [Bond] explained, "I never have more than one drink before dinner. But I do like that one to be large and very strong and very cold, and very well-made. I hate small portions of anything, particularly when they taste bad. This drink's my own invention. I'm going to patent it when I think of a good name."

Casino Royale, Chapter 7: Rouge et Noir
On the ordering of a Vesper:

More than a few of us were introduced to the art of living well by Ian Fleming and his fantasy alter ego, James Bond. Raymond Chandler described Fleming's anti-hero as "what every man would like to be and what every woman would like to have between her sheets." For better or worse, I'm fairly sure that it was not reading Fleming but rather watching Sean Connery's rendition in the theater that fired my imagination.

Bond had a definite view and none more lasting than "shaken and not stirred," as he ordered his vodka martini in the 1958 novel *Dr. No*. That the "controversy" inspired by this phrase persists today must put a smile on Mr. Fleming's face as he sips his evening cocktail in the great bar in the sky.

Google the phrase and you'll find an incredible volume of writing, serious and frivolous, about the merits of shaken versus stirred. Fascinating reading with points scored on both sides.

Bond sets up his argument as he orders, telling the bartender that he prefers vodka made from grain rather than potatoes. The wisdom was that before the 1960s, potato vodka was a bit oily, and shaking the martini dispersed the oiliness and made the cocktail ice-cold, which also dampened any unpleasant flavor.

I also ran across a reference to scientific research on the merits of shaken versus stirred. Researchers at the University of Western Ontario (have to love those Canadians; they understand what's really important) found that shaken martinis contain more anti-oxidants than stirred ones and are therefore more likely to help prevent cardiovascular disease. A martini a day. . .

But others decry the shaken martini. In NBC's *West Wing*, President Josiah Bartlet scoffs at the Bond martini in this exchange with his aide Charlie Young.

Bartlet: Can I tell you what's messed up about James Bond?
Young: Nothing.
Bartlet: Shaken, not stirred, will get you cold water with a dash of gin and dry vermouth. The reason you stir it with a special spoon is so not to chip the ice. James is ordering a weak martini and being snooty about it.

That exchange embodies the controversy.

Vodka martinis are best shaken. Gin martinis are best stirred.

The argument for stirring a gin martini was made for me as I watched a bartender at the Patterson House stir my Plymouth Gin martini. He said that gin, like whiskey, opens up with a bit of water, like the amount you get from melting ice, not by adding water; you want to smell the gin, the botanicals that give it character. "Too cold," he told me, "and you're wasting the gin."

After much experimentation I have come to agree with this sage advisor and enjoy my vodka martini ice-cold, shaken, and my gin martinis chilled, aromatic, stirred.

Enjoy.

Martini

I like both vodka and gin martinis and generally will alternate between them each Sunday.

Shaken

2 1/2 oz.	Stolichnaya Elit Vodka (from the freezer)
3/4 oz.	Dry vermouth (Dolin Dry)
	Olive

Pour the vermouth into an ice cube-filled martini glass and swirl until the glass is well-chilled. Dump the ice and vermouth into a cocktail shaker and drain the liquid from the shaker. Add the cold vodka to the cocktail shaker and shake vigorously.

Place an olive in the bottom of your chilled glass and pour in the vodka.

Stirred

2 1/2 oz.	Plymouth Gin
3/4 oz.	Dry vermouth (Dolin Dry)
	Lemon twist

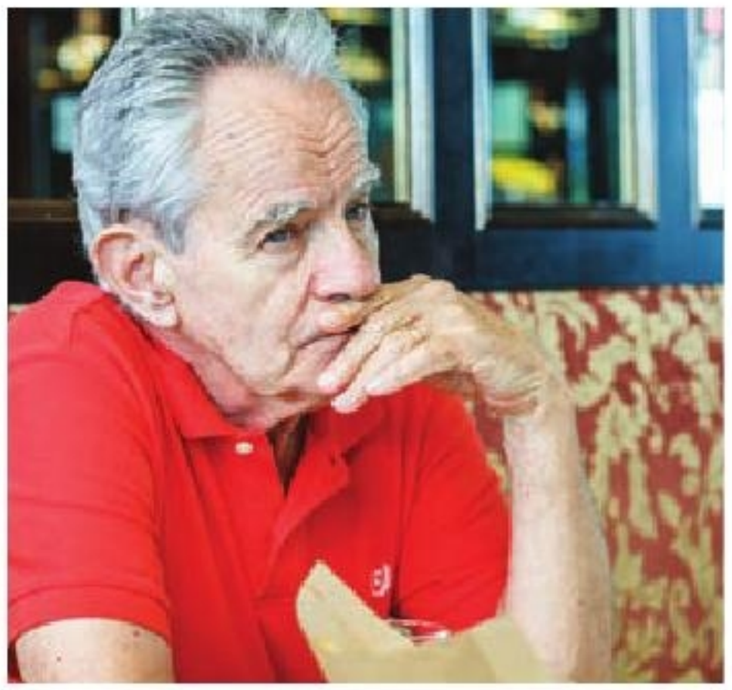
Pour the vermouth into an ice cube-filled martini glass and swirl until the glass is well-chilled. Dump the ice and vermouth into a stirring glass and drain the liquid, leaving the ice. Add the gin to the glass and stir until well-chilled.

Pour the gin into your chilled martini glass. Express a bit of oil from the lemon twist, and float the twist atop your martini.

Frank Daniels III is an editor and writer living in Nashville, Tennessee who frequently visits Wilmington. His cocktail book is Frank's Little Black Bar Book, *Wakestone Press. Contact him at fdanielsiii@mac.com.*

Microsaving the World

For Paul Wilkes, retirement was just the beginning



By Dana Sachs

"Golf is the stupidest game in the world," Paul Wilkes told me over lunch one day at Brasserie du Soleil, "at least to this guy." We were talking about how, back in 2006, he found himself facing retirement. He had spent his career as a journalist, publishing nearly two dozen books, hosting documentaries on PBS, and contributing to *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*. At 67 years old, he was turning away from journalism, however, and golf and other hobbies held no interest for him. So, he asked himself, "What next?"

Then Paul's wife, Tracy, who runs DREAMS of Wilmington, the award-winning after-school arts program for low-income kids, received a grant to take time off and "refresh" herself. "Let's have an experience, outside our comfort zone, " Paul said. They went to India and Sri Lanka.

Both Paul and Tracy are Catholic, and Paul's writing has long focused on religion. They built their itinerary around visits to two great sites, the Buddhist shrine Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka and the Hindu-influenced Trappist monastery of Kurisumala in the South Indian state of Kerala. In Kerala's capital city of Kochi, one day, they found themselves with a few unscheduled hours. "Amidst the beauty of India, the poverty gets you," Paul explained, so when their guide asked them what they'd like to do with their extra time, Paul said, "I'd like to see what my church is doing for children here." Their guide took them to a Catholic-run orphanage.

That visit changed Paul's life and, as it turned out, settled the question of what he'd do with his "retirement." During the first few minutes at the orphanage, he told me, "it didn't look that bad." The building, which housed seventy girls, was clean and the children seemed happy. The place was overcrowded, however, because girls kept arriving and the nuns, members of the Salesian Sisters of St. Don Bosco, never turned anyone away. "The stories were just horrible. This one had been raped. This one was left on the street at eight years old. This one was beaten by her father with a stick," says Paul. Hearing the stories, he was ready to pull out his wallet and do what any well-meaning visitor would do when confronted with such need, "give money and go back to my air-conditioned life."

And then he met Reena, a little girl wearing sunglasses to protect a damaged eye. As a small child, she had been abducted by a criminal gang. Knowing that deformities make a person a "better beggar," as Paul explained it, the gang used a darning needle to put out Reena's eye. Eventually, the Salesian sisters rescued her and brought her into their orphanage.

Before Paul explained the effect that Reena had on him, he made sure I didn't consider him a bleeding heart or just another softie. "Look, I don't even like my own kids," he told me, with a smile. "But something happened when I saw that face. It was beatific. I thought, 'If not me, who is going to help this kid? What can I do to make the rest of her life better?'"

When Paul and Tracy returned home, he took a close look at his life. His Social Security checks had just begun to arrive. "I thought, 'I can live on this.'" He resigned from his teaching position at UNCW and told himself, "This is my new job." With that, he founded Homes of Hope India, with the specific goal of making life better for Reena and girls like her. He started with the goal of building the Salesian sisters in Kochi a new orphanage. Over the past seven years, though, his organization, and the large group of donors it now counts on, has managed to do much more than that. The organization has raised $2 million, enough to build four orphanages and support thirty sites, schools, hostels and empowerment centers. Homes of Hope also offers micro-loans and counseling to poor women in towns and villages in three states across Southern India. As Paul and I were talking, his organization was caring for 500 girls.

I have to say that it's hard to get your head around numbers like that, which basically tell the story of one human being helping thousands of others over many years. For Paul, though, these are now the facts of his daily life, so he was better able to turn his attention to our food than I was. As you can tell by the restaurant's name, Brasserie du Soleil has the flair of a French bistro, but the menu has a broad range of other flavors, too.

We tried a tuna tartare first. "The last time I had any kind of 'tartare' dish," Paul told me, "I had steak tartare with Betty Friedan for an article for

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

The New York Times. She ate that steak tartare like a caveman. I glibly thought, 'There's the feminist movement right there.' But after three days talking about feminism with her, I decided, 'She's right.'"

Brasserie's tuna tartare is molded into a cylinder, studded with capers, and topped with a layer of chopped chives ("a buzz cut," as Paul put it.) "You're looking at it and wondering, 'How is this going to taste?'" he said, "but it's good, really fresh." As for the cocktail fruits de mer, a cold spicy mix of lobster, octopus, shrimp, oysters, clams and avocado in a chipotle and cilantro-infused tomato sauce, Paul simply called it "the perfect lunch dish."

Crepes can be disappointing because they sometimes obscure their main ingredients with heavy sauces, becoming "mayonnaise-y," as Paul described it. In Brasserie's local shrimp and crab crepe, though, he said, "the seafood really comes out." To be honest, "comes out" was one of several verbs we tested. In retrospect, I'm not sure it does the job. "Transport?" Paul asked. "Convey?" Food writing is a tasty job, but tricky.

Dessert arrived. Brasserie calls them "minis" because they are tiny confections — chocolate peanut butter pie, New York cheesecake with blueberry compote, crème brulee, to name a few — served with miniature spoons in what looked like shot glasses. Paul took a bite of the carrot cake version and ruminated for a moment. "Now," he finally said, "we've gotten into the profane."

Homes of Hope recently launched a new Web-based fundraising site, *letsbuildanorphanage.com*, which serves as a template for individuals wanting to raise money in their own creative ways. He also published an e-book, *MicroSaving the World*, which offers simple instructions for successful fundraising.

For now, Paul returns to India once a year to visit Homes of Hope's sites and check on the construction of new orphanages. "To do something like this is more fun than anything," he told me. "What do you really need at my age? You need a reason to get up in the morning and to say, 'This matters and I'm gonna go for it.' What else would I have done? Sit at the beach? Shoot me!"

For more information on Homes of Hope, visit www.homeofhopeindia.org. Brasserie du Soleil can be found at www.brasseriedusoleil.com.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*

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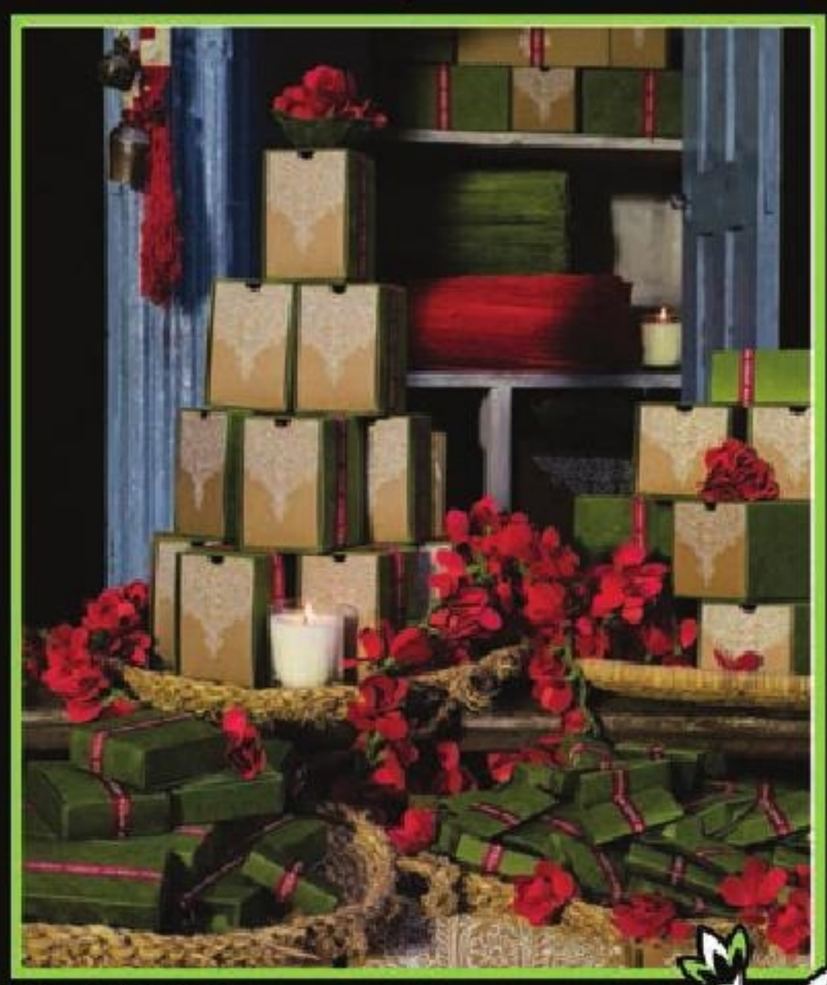

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Love and Tribulation

Louisa May Alcott's brief Southern exposure ruined her health – and made her a literary star

By Nan Graham

Accidental Southerners: Some came here on their own. Some were sent here. All were forever changed by the South.

It's a bit of a stretch to call author Louisa May Alcott an accidental Southerner . . . actually it's a cheat. Louisa May, of *Little Women* fame and daughter of Transcendentalist Bronson Alcott, was a to-the-bone New Englander through and through, but she did experience a time in Georgetown, Maryland, as a volunteer nurse at Union Hospital. Her duties there tending the wounded Union soldiers and in particular, a dying Virginia blacksmith, made a lasting impression on the writer. (Hold on, you say . . . Louisa May in the South . . . but Georgetown is in D.C.) Why no, Sugar. Not until 1871 was Georgetown incorporated into the District. Until then, it was a hotbed of Southern sympathizers. (This gives me an opportunity to repeat my favorite quote about the District of Columbia: Washington has "all the efficiency of the South and all the manners of the North.")

When Fort Sumter was fired on in April 1861, the "Secesh" crowd headed south out of Georgetown to Virginia. By December, the Union Hotel and Tavern, whose former celebrity guests included George Washington, John Quincy Adams and steamboat inventor Robert Fulton, had been emptied. The former inn was hastily transformed into the operational Union Hospital. The ousted tenants apparently left in an unpatriotic huff, stripping the place of every stick of furniture . . . including chamber pots.

Eighteen months later, in 1862, Louisa May, staunch abolitionist and volunteer nurse who was then approaching thirty, was assigned to the Georgetown hospital to be a nurse. Her medical expertise? None. Her only practical experience? Homegrown training in ministering to her large and often sickly family.

Dorothea Dix, head of the Sanitary Commission, never gave Miss Alcott's lack of skills a second thought: Louisa May had the other primary requirements for the position of nurse. Job description for a prospective nurse: ". . . thirty or older, sober-minded and plain-looking." Louisa May was definitely qualified.

She arrived only days after the slaughter at Fredericksburg; a tsunami of casualties flooded into Union Hospital. Her daily routine: bathe and feed the wounded, assist in seemingly endless amputations and other unspeakable surgeries, bandage foul, gangrenous wounds, and see to the final needs of dying soldiers. Little anesthesia and filthy operating conditions were the norm. Louisa May quickly acquired a nickname, "Nurse with a bottle," but not for the reason you might think. It was for the bottle of lavender water she wore around her neck at all times to keep the hospital stench at bay. After only weeks on duty, the novice nurse became deathly ill with typhoid pneumonia, one of the occupational hazards of the medical staff. Bronson Alcott took his daughter back home to Massachusetts to recuperate.

And what makes this brief foray into Southern territory significant for Louisa May? For those with typhoid pneumonia, the cure proved worse than the deadly disease. She recovered, but the aftermath of the medication was devastating. The popular treatment of the day for typhoid fever was calomel, heavily laced with mercury; it was the mercury which left Louisa May a semi-invalid for the rest of her abbreviated life.

Despite this health handicap, the complex Miss Louisa May Alcott became a prolific writer, turning out blood-curdling potboilers as well as her classic *Little Women* to support her family. A reclusive writer? Hardly. Besides her novels and plays, she dabbled in the theater and appeared as a comedienne, hobnobbed with the Transcendentalists and was tutored by both Thoreau and Emerson. She was an early "cougar" with a significant relationship with a man some thirteen years younger than her thirty-three years. Miss Louisa was something of a rock star of her day.

The positive results for her stay in a Southern territory? She emerged with scores of letters sent home which became the basis for her 1863 book, *Hospital Sketches*. It was on this book that Louisa May first used her real name instead of the nom de plume of Flora Fairfield or sometimes the androgynous A. M. Barnard she had used in her earlier work.

The sketches, though told by Alcott's fictitious narrator, Tribulation Periwinkle, were drawn from Louisa May's own hospital experiences. Best known was the touching chapter about a stoic Virginia blacksmith, wounded in the blood-laced battle of Fredericksburg, who died in Tribulation's (aka Louisa May's) arms.

Hospital Sketches, essentially a memoir, sold for fifty cents a copy and was wildly popular. The author received a grand royalty of five cents per copy and requested that the publisher pledge another five cents per book to be donated to children orphaned by the war. At age thirty-one, Louisa May was an instant literary celebrity. The book written after her brief foray South into Maryland gave her a new author's voice far more authentic than that of Flora Fairfield or A. M. Barnard. Her prolific writing career was launched.

Hospital Sketches catapulted its author onto the literary scene. Found: Miss Alcott's literary voice; lost: Louisa May's health. All from her brief venture South.

Nan Graham is a true Southerner and the literary doyenne of the Cape Fear. A shortened version of her Louisa May Alcott piece aired on WHRQ in May 2013.

The Taste of Late Autumn

As the season darkens, so does our beer – making Wilmington a true Port-er city

Cape Fear Wine and Beer

By Jason Frye

Autumn. On the tongue it tastes of apple and pumpkin; wood smoke; the tannic rot of leaves; crisp, clean frost; vanilla; coffee and caramel and chocolate. It tastes and smells like porter.

Even the colors take on the characteristics of porter and its darker beer cousins, from the mahogany of fallen leaves to the rich muddy marsh soil at low tide to the black waters of the Cape Fear River. Everywhere you look, everything you smell: porters and stouts and dunkels and bocks.

Porter-style beers are just a little older than Wilmington itself. The first beer of its kind was called "Entire," not porter, when it made its London debut in the 1720s. By the time Wilmington, then New Liverpool, was founded in 1739, Entire had become a workingman's drink and was especially popular among the porters who labored in London's ports and in her crowded streets. Fitting then to drink a porter in Wilmington, a key port to the young colony of North Carolina and a major port to this day.

As summer, which can persist here well into October, withdraws its heat and humidity, we swap summery lagers and citrusy, hoppy IPAs for the dark, robust beers of fall. It's a strange transition for some, but for others, it's long awaited refreshment.

Downtown dwellers know Cape Fear Wine and Beer on Front Street for the punk rock spilling noisily into the street, or by Josh, the vested, bearded bouncer checking IDs at the door. Beer aficionados know it for an entirely different reason. Inside this dim bar — one part Beowulf's mead hall, one part modern-day watering hole — are hundreds of beers, many in bottles; a dozen or more on draft. Near the ceiling, shingles espousing the brews du jour hang from single nails. This time of the year, the selection is thick with decadent dark beers like Evil Twin Blackout Imperial Porter, a potent pint that weighs in at a whopping 10.2 percent ABV. When the bartenders pour a pint of it, the brew is shockingly dark. One sniff pulls fall into your nose — slightly smoky, a little char, a little bit like leaves after a rain storm — and the first sip of the silky beer is savory, finishing with a bitter, coffee-like bite.

And it just gets better from there.

For some.

For others the scene goes like this: A couple approach the bar, study the shingles, settle on the Evil Twin. They order and the bartender promptly passes over their pint. She tastes it. Her eyes light up, then close as she rolls it around her mouth. She passes the glass to him. He drinks deep, one big swallow. He makes a face and says, "It tastes like soy sauce." Then he orders a saison, a style of spicy pale ale, to wash the umami away.

Finding a bottle to enjoy at home — preferably with a porterhouse steak — can be a challenge if you're not familiar with the style. Enter Lighthouse Beer and Wine. This tiny blue cracker box of a building is something like the TARDIS of beer (with a sizable corner devoted to wine). Walk through the screen door and the ceiling is there, pressing you down, and a head-high rack of beer dominates the space. More beer stands in stacks on the floor. More on shelves. Even more in coolers. The selection of more than seven hundred beers is overwhelming — unless you ask for help, that is.

Inquire about porters and stouts and discover the breadth of the

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

style. Foothills Brewing Company (from Winston-Salem) has a beautiful Bourbon Barrel-aged Porter out for the season. A taste reveals the best malty aspects of porter plus the vanilla and smoky oak notes of bourbon. Or try Indra Kunindra from Ballast Point Brewing Company (San Diego). The staff at Lighthouse describes this beer as "Indochine in a bottle," and since it's flavored with curry, cumin, coconut and kaffir lime, it's easy to see yourself with a glass of this and a plate of Buddha's Feast in a Nest. This East-meets-West beer marries Southeast Asia with fine English beer, no easy feat. It's a riot in your mouth, with seemingly competing flavors melding to become one cohesive and familiar swallow of beer. In some ways it's like an abstract landscape — made up of parts until you see the whole.

Trial and error is another method of discovery. Hops Supply Company offers pick-your-flight-Mondays. That's four 4-ounce tasting pours of your choice of beer. Go for a dark tasting; your taste buds will thank you for the rest of the winter.

Start light with Dark Cloud, a dunkel by Mother Earth Brewing, followed by Lonerider Sweet Josie Brown Ale? Yes, please. The dunkel is earthy and nutty; the brown ale, malty and aromatic. Both set the stage for Duck Rabbit Porter, dark chocolate and roasted grains — an exercise in bitter and sweet. Finish with Huske Hardware's Sledgehammer, a cream stout made with oats and barley. Slightly sweet, very full in the mouth, easy to drink.

As winter settles in, the Porter City keeps warm with these big, full-bodied beers that remind us of autumn's warmer nights and the river's rich waters. One taste of a good porter and you're transported to a crisp fall afternoon, the sun warming your back, the breeze bringing a chill, the beer pulling its flavors from the air around you.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of two forthcoming travel guides. He's a barbecue judge, outdoor enthusiast, poet, and lover of all things North Carolina.

For the Love of a Peanut

Bagged or boiled, a legacy from the soil of the South

By Bill Thompson

I once proposed that a major criterion for determining whether a person was a real North Carolinian was his or her degree of fondness for boiled peanuts. I figured that, if you had gone so far as to have served boiled peanuts as an entrée, you may qualify as a native North Carolinian. I came to that opinion based on my own fondness for the legume and the shared opinion of just about everybody I know. The opinion was that boiled peanuts are one of the premier products of the Carolina soil, a food to be savored and appreciated in every household, and held in the same reverence as collards and grits.

Alas, I found that my opinion was not universally shared. In fact, many folks north and west of Raleigh not only fail to share my love for boiled peanuts, but look with disdain on them; some even ventured to say that they were not "fit to eat."

So it was with some interest that I stopped to visit with a nearby roadside produce vendor back in the early fall. There was a big, hand-painted sign out on the highway that proclaimed "FRESH BOILED PEANUTS." Boiled peanuts in season — hot, juicy legumes, recently plucked from the soil and still soaking in the briny water — are uniquely satisfying to a country boy who grew up in the swamps and sandy fields of southeastern North Carolina. Such produce transcends the bounds of mortal nourishment and becomes the nectar of the gods. Such is the force that drew me from the traffic of modern life to the seductive (metal) tent of the peanut vendor.

There is something about the outdoor market, something that is at once temporary, yet also transcends time. It's easy to envision the ancient, open-air marketplaces where the products being sold were produced by the salesmen. Such is this produce stand, all sides open to the breeze that blows across the produce, wafting the collective smell of the Earth just as it did thousands of years ago.

My wife, epicurean that she is, loves to stop at these places to peruse the more mundane products of the Earth: peaches, apples, melons, delicious butter beans and peas, onions so pungent they tickle your nostrils, purple and white turnips with a little bit of the dirt still attached. She can take those items and magically turn them into culinary masterpieces.

As she considers the possible purchase of those succulent items to grace our table, I linger by the boiled peanuts. I savor the smell of the steam rising from the large steel pots sitting on the butane burners. The smell of the boiling peanuts triggers memories of the days of my youth toiling in the peanut fields, digging up bushes from the ground, picking the peanuts off and placing them in wooden baskets as I sat on the tailgate of a pickup truck laden with the harvest.

My reverie is broken by the voice of the vendor: "You want some of them raw ones or the boiled ones, buddy?"

I am torn between buying the finished product, bagged and ready to be eaten, or prolonging the sweet agony by buying the raw peanuts, still

cool and waiting for my own personal treatment that will imbue the pure, untainted gems of the Earth with the unmatched flavor that only comes with the knowledge of a process handed down by generations of boiled peanut connoisseurs.

Life is too short to ponder such decisions for very long. With the wisdom of Solomon, I buy some of both: some to eat as I go down the road and some to prepare when I get home.

The enjoyment and appreciation of boiled peanuts is a legacy I want to leave for my children and their children yet to come. My brother-in-law and my son-in-law, both products of that culinary chasm of Earth north of Maryland, cannot abide boiled peanuts. Therefore, it is left up to me to ensure their children's awareness of their culinary heritage. Boiling peanuts is a part of their heritage, a tie to the land from which we all spring and to which we will all return. As Gerald O'Hara once said to Miss Scarlett, "Why land is the only thing in the world worth livin' for, worth fightin' for, worth dyin' for? Because it's the only thing that lasts." Just like boiled peanuts.

Bill Thompson is a speaker and author who lives just down the road, in nearby Hallsboro.

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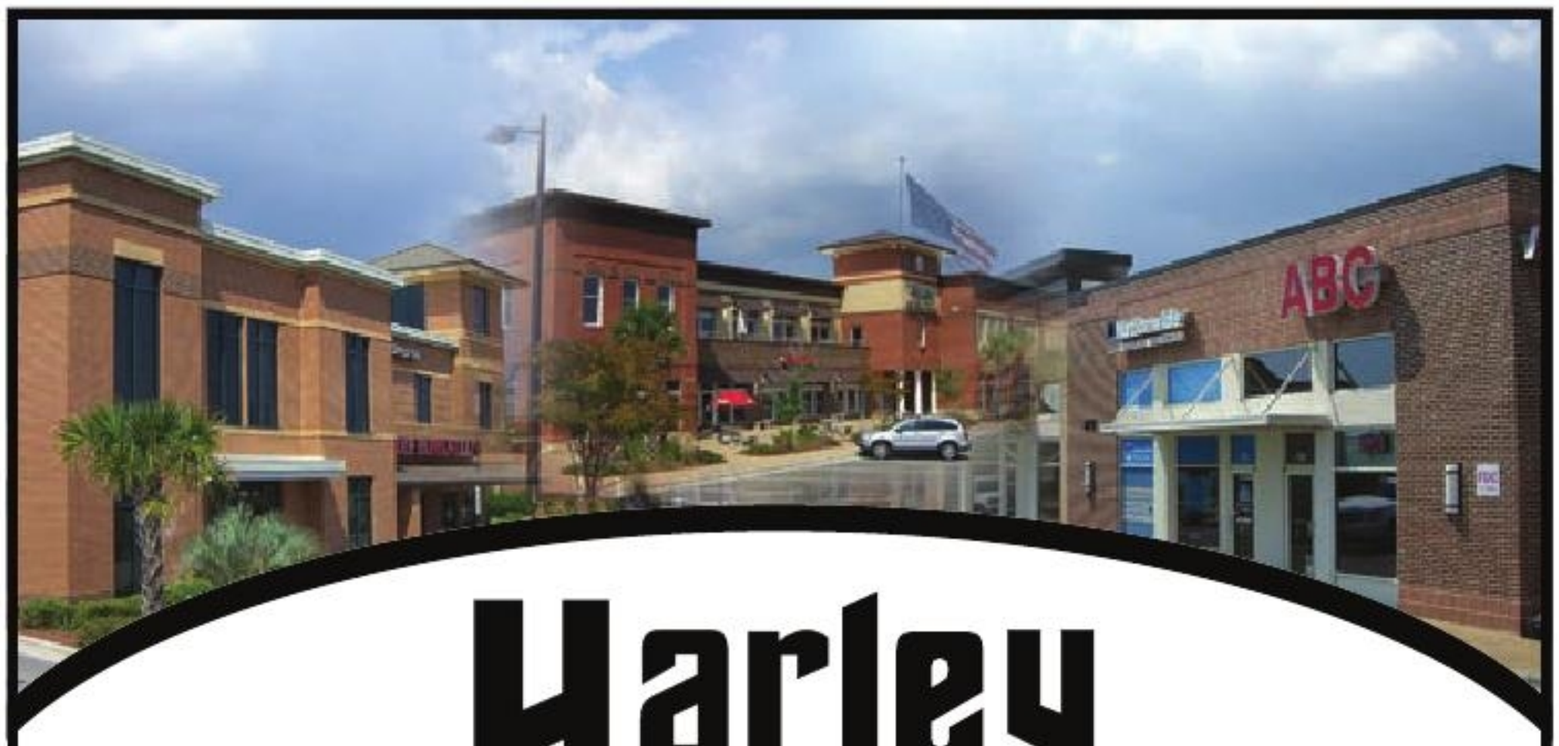

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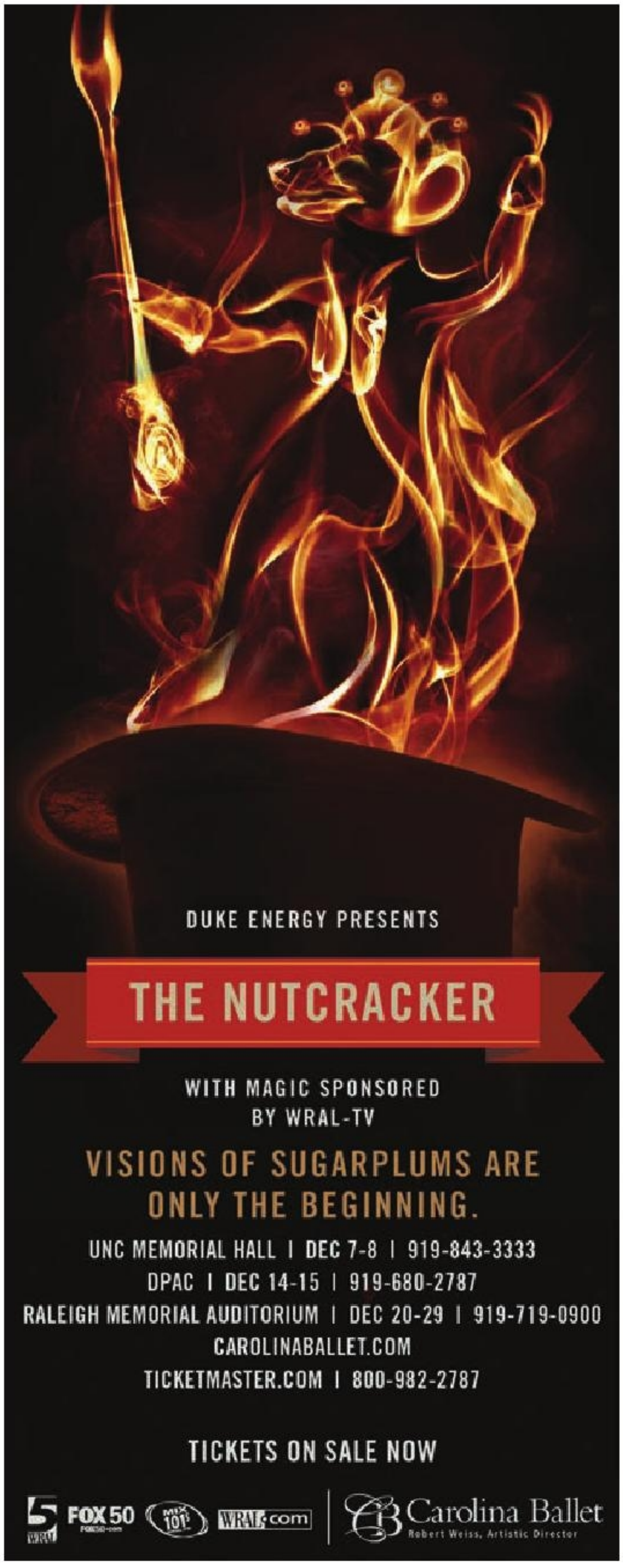

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Great Black-Backed Gull

The grandaddy of them all

By Susan Campbell

To many, a seagull is, well, a seagull. But as it turns out, here in coastal North Carolina, we have several species of gulls. The black-backed gull is the granddaddy of them all. These large, bulky birds have a wing span of over five feet — and they're among the most aggressive birds on the beach. With its lumbering flight, massive head and substantial bill, the great black-backed is easy to recognize without the aid of binoculars. Moreover, it is a species that has become more numerous in our state over the last few decades.

Great black-backed gulls typically nest up North — throughout New England and up into the Canadian Maritimes — but a number of pairs can be found mixed in with other gulls nesting on dredge spoil in the Pamlico Sound. Together, pairs form a bulky cup nest from dried grasses directly on the sand. Olive-buff eggs with dark blotches, normally two or three per season, are incubated by the female for just shy of one month. The young are precocial, covered with thick down and capable of coordinated movements just moments after hatching. Although they may stay close to the nest for the first day or two, great black-backed chicks will wander freely around the colony until fledging. Both adults will brood the young and feed them for about eight weeks, until they are capable of sustained flight.

Large gulls require four years to mature. Younger birds may be a mix of black, gray and white. In their first year, great black-backed gulls have an evenly checkered black and white back and also gray barring on their neck and sides. In their second year, birds will attain gray-black mottling on their backs. By year three, they will display a mainly black back, although they often still have a black tail band and some streaking on their nape. Adults have pale pink legs, a bright yellow bill and large white spots on their wing tips. During the breeding season, they develop a prominent red spot on the base of the bill and a red eye ring.

Dispersal occurs in late summer, with great black-backed gulls moving south into North Carolina through December. Thousands of these big birds overwinter here each year. They often associate with the slightly smaller herring gulls on beaches, sand bars, bridges, and even inland waterways. Individuals may be spotted at landfills and reservoirs as far west as the Triangle.

Easy pickings around cities have made the expansion of this species so successful. Not only do they prey on a variety of aquatic and terrestrial creatures, but they steal food from other birds and scavenge what fisherman and beach-goers leave behind. Their size and opportunistic feeding behavior combined with human development has allowed these gulls to not only thrive, but to successfully colonize new areas.

Believe it or not, winter is when gull diversity is highest here. Therefore, over the coming months, we will explore other species. Stay tuned!

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. Contact her by email at susan@ncaves.com, or by calling (910) 949-3207.

Umbrella Church

Artist Diane Landry's wondrous new exhibition at the Cameron, The Cadence of All Things, *offers secret glimpses of the divine*

By Isabel Zermani

Seven years ago I was an art school dropout who flew south to recover from New York City's deadening overload. Here, I took a job as a waitress, but a waitress at the art museum. Pockets stuffed with crumpled bar napkins and shredded Sweet'N Low packets, I'd walk the galleries after my lunch shift and hope my all-black outfit said I am a serious artist, not I work in the restaurant. I was 20.

I needed a respite.

One day I wandered into the back gallery of the museum and encountered something divine. Umbrellas of all colors and sorts slowly opening and closing by tiny motors. Bellows wheezed through harmonicas, giving each creature its own sigh. A feeling of being underwater permeated the navy room as blooms of light and shadow played on the surface — the ceiling. It was an accidental symphony. It was Diane Landry's installation, "Flying School."

Each umbrella creature rose on an inhale, shone its light, and exhaled on a plié at its own pace, as if learning to ride a very slow bicycle. I found myself rooting for them, those umbrellas. It's funny where you find a mirror of your own life. I felt like a discarded umbrella. I saw myself in those creatures; recovering, learning, shining, dimming, sighing, and starting over. Their plight induced a sense of beauty and joy I hadn't felt before. Like an iron lung, it filled me.

Everybody has his or her church. "Flying School" became mine.

I used to visit Calder's Circus at the Whitney Museum in New York City. How I longed to see it move. Wheels turning. Axels grinding. The cracking of a whip. But the fleas had all gone home.

The same guard was still at the Cameron Art Museum seven years later when I came to see Landry's full exhibition, *The Cadence of All Things*, as a museum member, graduate and art writer. He remembered my daily devotion to the umbrellas after the lunch rush.

"Flying School" cycles in the back gallery as if it never left. To get there you walk the entire Brown Wing, which is filled with Landry's work. Wilmington is an unlikely Mecca of modern art, but this is the largest retrospective of Landry's work to date. For me it is Christmas, Rosh Hashana and Ramadan all in one. I attended a lecture with the artist herself. Call it the second coming.

Diane Landry is a petite, unassuming French Canadian installation artist. She wears all black and a body mic — TED talk-ready — but she wasn't here to preach. She wasn't here to perform, though she's also a performance artist. She, like her work, doesn't boast, but draws you into the simple, revealing the performance that is already there. Everyday performances that are always happening. See that water bottle? Laundry hamper? Umbrella shadow? Regular life is her block of marble; like a sculptor, she frees the art within it.

On the gallery tour with Landry the crowd gathered and papered the walls with their bodies around the umbrella hatchery. Faces illuminated

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY DIANE LANDRY

from below as if by campfire. The harmonicas sighed. The kaleidoscope of ceiling shadows bloomed. Landry asked if anyone had any questions. We sunbathed in joy and wonder.

And I fell in love all over again.

Anne Brennan, CAM executive director, acknowledged the moment: "I love that. Nobody has a question. The answers are right here." Her fingertips raise to her chin and her lips tremble.

Landry's agent told me of her bravery. How she studied science and civil engineering and left that world behind to become an artist. How she supported herself as a postal carrier through art school.

Her curator told us of her ideals. Her feminist skis iron a table of folded shirts called "Snow-Table." Her environmentalist net of plastic cutlery called "Exhaustion" comments on our over-fished oceans.

Landry smiled a poet-smile and said, "There's nothing to understand. It's just me making something."

The distance between a laundry basket and religious experience is about two feet. Landry's mandalas, a nod to Carl Jung, who popularized the circular Hindu art, are perhaps her most distilled and impressive work. A light on a rod and hinge orbits into the belly of a white plastic laundry basket mounted on the wall and then back out. As the light changes position, the basket's shadow creates a lacy mandala fanning out on the gallery wall. Then the light retreats. The shadow shrinks like night-blooming jasmine at sunrise. The ordinary basket remains inconspicuous.

I now suspect secret beauty is everywhere.

"Knight of Infinite Resignation" recalls my dark night of the soul. Windmills of bicycle wheels spin at their own pace by some unfelt wind. A Midwestern mindscape. An empty fairground. Water bottles flare off the tires like daisy petals, each containing a small light covered and uncovered by sand. The light never goes out, but is only hidden. An ever-present sound-scape of shifting hourglasses lulls the watchers.

The title recalls a parable by the philosopher Kierkegaard of a knight who accepts his fate: that he will never have his love in this lifetime. He feels an infinity of sadness with a tiny hope for a chance at love in his next life. I see the lights as hope. Lights that never truly go out.

Diane Landry's exhibition, *The Cadence of All Things*, is on display at the Cameron Art Museum until January 12, 2014. For more information, visit www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Isabel Zermani (formerly Isabel Heblich) is a local writer, artist, and performer who seeks beauty and synchronicity wherever she can find it. Sometimes it finds her.

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Ferry to Paradise Lost

Unless something changes soon, the charm of Ocracoke Island may be a sportman's memory.

By Tom Bryant

"Just pull your vehicle up behind that pickup in lane one. The ferry is on time. You'll find drinks and snacks and restrooms in the building. Remember to be in your car ten minutes before 4 o'clock. We'll begin loading then. It's a great day for a boat ride. Y'all have fun." The lady with the ferry service was all smiles and looked happy to see us.

My bride, Linda, and I were at Cedar Island, looking forward to the ferry trip over to Ocracoke. It had been over a year since our last visit, and I was interested to see if there had been any changes since our last adventure around what I like to call "the loop," which is one of my favorite road trips ever.

The loop, because it's a loop, can be driven two ways. One route goes to Raleigh, over to Manteo, then from Nags Head down to Buxton, Frisco, and pauses at Cape Hatteras. Then you take the short ferry over to Ocracoke and the long ferry to Cedar Island and then Beaufort. That's the northern route. The southern route can be done by reversing the course. Either way will take you to some of the most striking, wild coastal scenery in North Carolina, if not the country.

My first trip to the Outer Banks was in 1967. I was done with college, freshly out of the Marine Corps and had just married one of the sweetest girls in the world. Things were good. On our first trip, we lodged at the Bluff Shoal Motel, a small seven-room unit that was almost brand new, having been built the year before. On this latest adventure, we reserved a room at the same motel and were excited about our visit. In past years, we had passed by the little motel several times but hadn't stayed there since our first journey in the 60s.

This ferry trip was everything I remembered: seagulls hovering over the stern, backlit by a beautiful blue fall sky and puffy cumulus clouds. Every now and then, a gull would dive into the wake of the boat and pick up an errant baitfish that the ferry stirred up from the bottom. After a two-and-a-half-hour ride, we arrived at Ocracoke and the Bluff Shoal Motel in plenty of time for supper.

Ocracoke is a small island, maybe fourteen miles long, and the only one on the Outer Banks accessible by ferry from the south and the north. It's famous not only as an oceanside resort for people from all over the country, but for its pirate, Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard. Teach hung his pirate hat at Ocracoke using Silver Lake, the small harbor that anchors the little village, as his haven. Later, unfortunately for him, he not only hung his hat but had his head, supposedly, staked to the bow of the British cutter Ranger. Blackbeard was caught and beheaded by the English Captain Robert Maynard, ending his infamous stay on Ocracoke Island the hard way. Silver Lake Harbor is still the center of all the happenings in the village with roads leading from the ferry dock across the small town to hotels, gift shops and restaurants.

The day after we arrived, we wandered the village, becoming reacquainted with shops and restaurants. One thing was very evident, and that was the influx of new owners of many eateries and retail stores that we visited.

Right across the street from the motel is a little seafood place that advertises its happy hour with baskets of boiled shrimp for $6. It was as good as I thought it would be, and while we ate, we put together an itinerary for our visit the next day to Cape Hatteras.

Unfortunately our last trip to the Banks and the little towns from Hatteras north warned that there was trouble in paradise, especially if you were a surf fisherman or enjoyed driving on the beach. We hoped to find out if the situation had changed in the year-and-a-half since our last visit to the area.

The free ferry ride from Ocracoke to Hatteras takes about forty minutes and winds through the Pamlico on a circuitous route dodging the shoaling bottom of moving sand. There is always an ongoing battle with nature to keep the ferry cuts from closing, with the surf playing havoc with sand bars, requiring almost a constant need for dredging.

Our ride was uneventful and on time, a big difference from our last visit when our ferry almost got stuck on a shallow bottom.

We drove up Highway 12 to Buxton and stopped at one of my favorite fishing tackle shops. I went in to browse around while Linda picked up a few items from the grocery store next door.

A young lady was behind the counter waiting on a fisherman buying lures. I couldn't help overhearing their conversation.

"How did it go yesterday?" she asked.

"We had a great time. Caught some blues and a couple of drum. We're going back out today to try 'em again," he replied.

"Surf fishing?"

"Naw. We're going in the boat again. The point is closed. Turtle nest, I understand."

"Yes, but it was supposed to open today. Do you want me to call and check?"

"No, that's OK. We're leaving in a couple of days and I'm not gonna buy a permit for just one day"

The permit, I found out later, was for driving on the beach and was quite expensive—$50 for one week and $120 for the remainder of the year. The young lady looked over at me and noticed that I was listening. "Can I help you?"

"Well, you can. I'm an outdoor writer and am doing a follow-up story on one that I did a little over a year ago about surf fishing on the Outer Banks."

Her expression darkened. "I remember the story and I thank you for doing it. Things haven't got any better. If anything, it's worse. The Feds will hardly talk to us. They close the beaches at the drop of a hat. Stretches of Buxton were closed about all summer."

"How is that affecting your business?" I asked.

"Exponentially," she replied. "It's terrible."

The fisherman paid for his purchase. "Yep, so you're a writer? Who do you write for?"

"Mostly magazines and newspapers," I replied.

"Well, let me throw in my two cents worth about fishing around here," he said. "I'm from Williamsburg up in Virginia, and I've been coming down to the Banks to fish for years and it's not the same. I've got friends over in Richmond who are primarily surf fishermen who have stopped coming at all. Too much of a hassle, they say. If you don't have a boat and depend on surf fishing, you're out of luck." The lady behind the counter nodded her head in agreement.

Linda and I left Buxton not feeling too encouraged about our morning information jaunt and decided to stop for lunch at a small deli, the same one from a year ago. I didn't recognize the lady who helped us but I said, "We love your deli. We were here a while back and your sandwiches were great. The gentleman who owns the place was also a charter boat fisherman. Is he around?"

"No, as a matter of fact we just bought it in July. The previous owners moved to Asheville."

"How about the gift shop next door?" Linda asked.

"They went out of business last fall. There's a beauty shop there now."

The more we talked to people, the more we realized how hard it is to run a small retail business, especially on the Outer Banks.

Ferries are supposed to leave Hatteras for Ocracoke every thirty minutes. On this day, we had to wait for almost an hour-and-a-half for our turn. I counted about one hundred cars waiting in seven lanes for the trip. One of the security guys told me that most of them are day-trippers, staying somewhere on the Banks and riding the free ferry over to the island to check out the scenery. They were tourists from all over the country, looking to have a good time.

That afternoon as I sat on the little front porch facing Ocracoke's small Main Street, I watched as the tourist traffic paraded along. Rental golf carts were in the mix, along with bikes and hikers. The atmosphere was almost circus-like. I watched for a while until five loud motorcycles rattled the windows as they rumbled by.

Fortunately, the motel has a private dock area behind it, facing Silver Lake Harbor, and I headed back there for some peace and quiet. I was the only one on the patio and kicked back in a weathered Adirondack chair. It was almost peaceful but I could still hear the hubbub from the street. I remembered the early days on the Outer Banks and reflected on how it used to be a fisherman's haven and restful retreat. Now I'm afraid, if things don't change, this place is well on the way to becoming just another beach town.

Tom Bryant is a lifelong outdoorsman and Salt's *Sporting Life columnist.*

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Three Sisters and the Oldest Trees on Earth

A legendary paddler leads an expedition through a blackwater labyrinth of mystery and intoxicating beauty

By Virginia Holman

According to the USGS gauge at Tomahawk, the Black River is running at thirteen feet. Fall is in the air, and the warmth of the afternoon sun is shot through with a fine cool breeze. Paul Ferguson and I, and three of my friends, aim to paddle the river for the better part of the day, spending most of it among the oldest living trees east of the Rockies. We're almost to the Narrows, a notoriously long, boggy point of portage if the water's under six feet. Today, with the river so high, I've been looking forward to gliding through the Narrows without muddying my feet and dragging my kayak.

Paul's ahead of me, paddling his battered 20-year-old Mad River Explorer canoe, a big old honking brontosaurus of a boat compared with the sleek, nimble Hurricane kayaks my companions and I are paddling. "I know an alternate route," Paul calls over his shoulder. He is a tall, direct, understated and highly accomplished man of seventy who has meticulously documented thousands of miles of trails in the Carolinas. The result is *Paddling Eastern North Carolina*, a book so revered among paddlers in the Southeast it is often referred to simply as "Ferguson's" or "The Paddler's Bible." His book tells you exactly where to put in and take out, minimum and maximum water levels for paddling, as well as useful information on flora and fauna. Other guidebooks may be adequate but none begin to approach the thoroughness and technical accuracy of "Ferguson's." Unlike other paddling guides to the region, if the information is in "Ferguson's," you may rely on it. Next year, Pocosin Press will publish his second book, *Paddling Eastern South Carolina*.

Our group is excited to go off the "beaten path" of the swamp with Ferguson. Who cares what time we return? As autumn comes on, the sun's setting earlier and earlier. If I were out here with anyone other than Paul Ferguson and was asked if I wanted to take an alternate route through this blackwater labyrinth, I'd be wary. Three Sisters cypress swamp is not the sort of place most folks want to be past dark. Cell reception is spotty to nonexistent depending on your carrier, there are no nearby homes, the best banks for take-outs today are underwater, and in the last two hours we've spotted a good bit of critter activity on our way to the swamp: five friendly northern water snakes; one coiled, lurking cottonmouth; three basketball-sized hornets' nests; and four swarming wasps' nests — most at eye-level or within arm's reach given the floodwaters. Let's just say it's a good day to steer clear of the brush along the banks.

Paul says he sees a small, clear path and proceeds to carve a turn toward an eight-foot-wide bloom of poison ivy. Then, he slices his canoe paddle in the water just behind his hip, and the brontosaurus pivots, suddenly elegant and sylphlike, before it vanishes from sight in the dappled swamp. Even if you know where you're going in the swamp, it doesn't take much to get turned around, and simply following the way the water flows won't necessarily lead you to anyplace a kayak can pass through. This swamp is a profoundly mysterious place, and one of intoxicating beauty, like something out of a fairytale.

I look back at my friends, all of whom escaped their Thursday workday duties to meet and paddle with the legendary Ferguson. Lydia is a former world champion surf kayaker, and my other two friends are kayak guides by trade. I've been paddling for nearly ten years now and am an ACA level 3 certified coastal kayak instructor and avid Greenland style kayak roller. I sound like I'm bragging on our group, but I'm mostly pointing out that we're a skilled and experienced lot, and we've been out in the Three Sisters cypress swamp nearly a hundred times among the four of us. So it's mildly disconcerting to look ahead and realize that we now

PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN AND LYDIA MCGHEE

resemble a waterborne version of the Keystone Kops in pursuit of the elegant Paul Ferguson.

The small passage between the "poison ivy tree" and an old cypress is only about three feet wide, barely wide enough for a canoe, but spacious enough for my 21-inch-wide kayak. I head toward it, bow rudder, and the kayak turns, but I still find I have to back up and re-angle my boat, which means the poison ivy is now brushing my collar and sleeve. I hack at the bush with my paddle. Once through, I zip ahead to see if I can locate Paul in the swampy cypress maze. The water is so high, many of the huge cypress knees, or pneumatophores, are completely submerged. Small bubbles carve a bright path ahead. I'm disappointed to discover these weren't made by Paul's canoe; they are just generated by the current. There's thrashing behind me followed by a brief discussion of cortisone shots and allergies. One of my two guide pals passes me and then disappears in the swamp as well. After ten minutes or so, we see the stern of his red kayak and then the flash of Paul's white paddle.

Now that we're all in sight of one another, we can relax and explore. The cypress trees in this swamp are exceptional not because of their height, but because of their age. In 1981, researchers from the University of Arkansas took core samples of some of the older looking trees in the swamp. Some, according to David Stahle, the researcher who first core sampled the trees, are around 2,000 years old. It's almost impossible to imagine: a tree, alive, for 2,000 years. If you are looking for perspective in your life, a trip to the Three Sisters cypress swamp is a useful human reminder that all is vanity. Some of these trees were growing when Diocletian was Emperor of Rome. How much has fallen and passed away in the centuries since they sprouted? Yet here these cypress stand, silent and thriving in the ever flowing blackwater. This year the cypress trees housed heron nests and a wood stork rookery. Their gnarled branches form a tangled canopy above us. They seem to map the sky.

For a time, one tree became famous. She was named Methuselah and marked with a small metal tag, because her core sample dated her at 1,800 years of age. Other trees are older, but because they suffered heart rot, these could not be accurately core sampled. Methuselah's tag is now gone, and her location known to a handful. It's just as well. Many of the cypress here are ancient trees — there seems little need to single out any one in particular.

When we exit the swamp, we take out for lunch at a private landing on a hill. Paul knows the owner. One of our guide friends wades out to the bench for a photo op. The water is so high he appears to float on a park bench in the middle of the river, cooling his heels.

Over lunch on the riverbank I tell Paul that his book is wonderful (which it is) and that it must be satisfying to have created something that has helped and inspired so many people to explore North Carolina's waterways. He thanks me, but it's clear he doesn't like having too much attention focused on him. Instead, he speaks of some of his favorite rivers: the Haw, near his home in Raleigh, and the Edisto River in South Carolina.

The book is meticulous in its detail, no doubt informed by his years as an engineer. His career at IBM included a stint as lead engineer of the team that supported the ground computer system for the Saturn V rocket, known as Apollo 6. He describes the year leading up to the launch as exciting. But after that first launch, he decided he wanted a new challenge and put in for a transfer. He worked in Raleigh and London and found that paddling became a part of his personal life. "I worked in London for three years and while there I bought a canoe and paddled in England and Scotland. I also took my canoe on some vacations in France and Swedish Lapland."

When he retired at age 50, he set out to write his book because it would be a fresh challenge and get him out on the water with regularity. To assemble the book on Eastern North Carolina, Paul estimates that he drove over 75 thousand miles to various water trails. So far for his upcoming book on South Carolina, he estimates he's driven 30 thousand miles. "My next book should be on where not to eat while you're on the road."

The floodwater carries us to our take-out at Newby's Landing faster than I'd like. On the open stretches, we barely have to paddle at all. When we arrive at our take-out, Paul motions me over to his van. It's a seven-foot-tall fully outfitted affair. Inside, he's outfitted it with many creature comforts. Several old wooden wine cases have been cleverly assembled to form both a bureau for camping supplies and to serve as a platform for Paul's fold-out double bed. It's a pretty spiffy setup, and I wish I had enough overhead room in my truck camper for something similar.

As the rest of us load our kayaks, Paul reaches down, flips the brontosaurus of a canoe up to his chest, and then hoists it over his head. He carries it over to his seven-foot van, straps it down, downs a cold Frappuccino from the cooler in his super-cool camper, and says, "Hey, this was fun. Thanks for inviting me." Then, all at once, the van's gone up the driveway in a cloud of gravel dust, and Paul's off to his next adventure.

Want to go to the Three Sisters?
Buy a copy of Paul Ferguson's book, *Paddling Eastern North Carolina*; www.pocosinpress.com. We paddled section six of the Black River.
Several kayak companies offer tours of the area. Especially fun in November and December are the mistletoe gathering trips run by:
Kayak Carolina: (910) 707-0361;
www.kayakcarolina.com
Watersmith Kayaking: (910) 805-2517;
watersmithkayaking.com
and Manahaim Adventures: (910) 547-8252;
mahanaimadventures.com.

You can also see parts of the swamp with Wilmington Water Tours, which runs boat trips to the area. Info: (910) 338-3134 or www.wilmingtonwatertours.net.

Special thanks to Hurricane Kayaks for providing the kayaks for the paddlers on this excursion.

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the Creative Writing Department at UNC Wilmington. She is also an ACA certified Level 3 Coastal Kayak Instructor and guides part time with Kayak Carolina.

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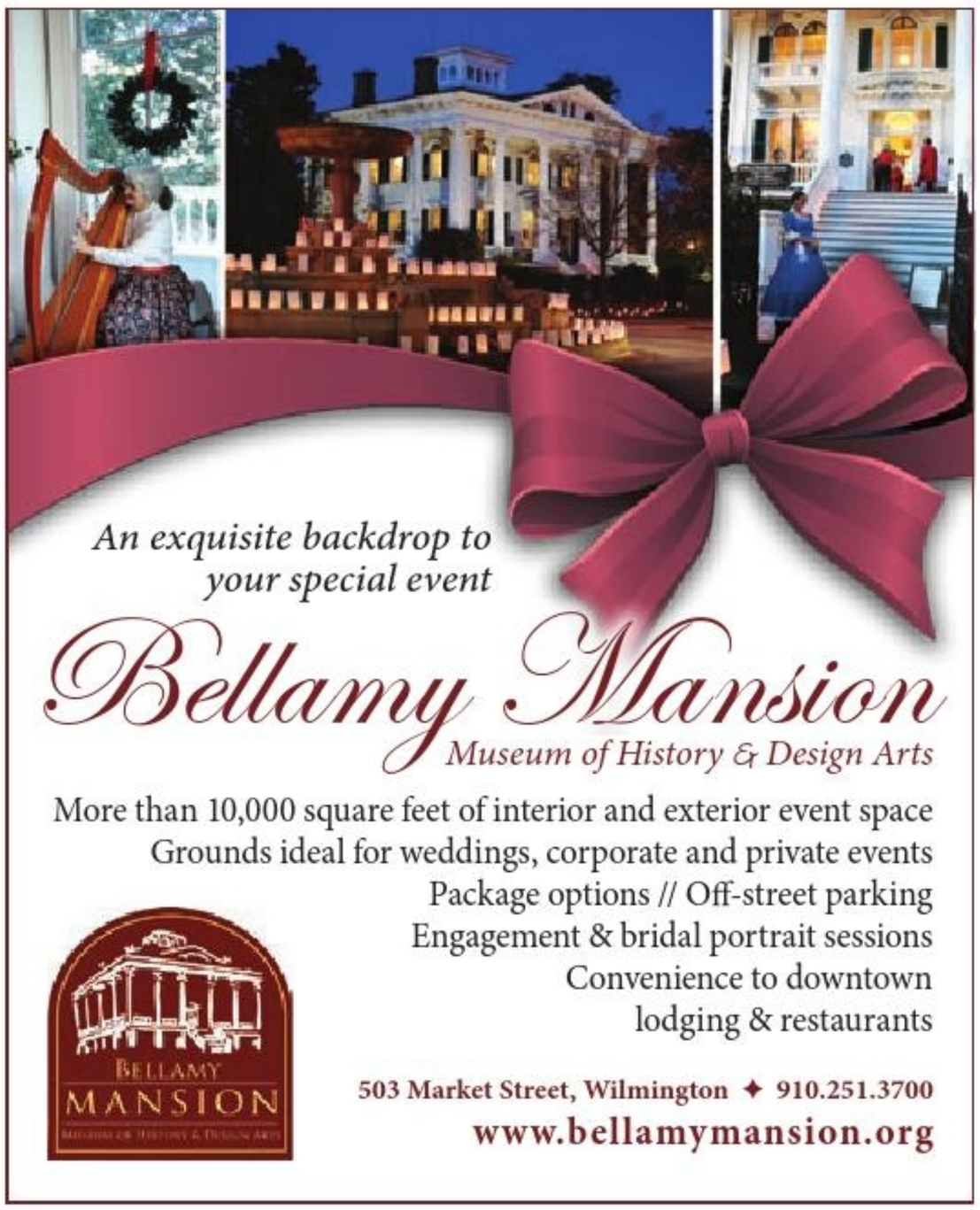

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Night Boat to Mwanza

Dear Waters Black as Monkeys
Climbing Trees in my Head,

Mind if I kiss you hard
to discover what you're hiding?

Dear Wind the Same Temperature as my Face,
Dear Footsteps of Water Striders,

Please forgive, bursting upon impact,
the indiscernible sailboat.

I craft blind spots
to believe the world exists.

It's both sad and funny,
like getting beat up by your grandmother.

The woman eating quinoa salad
from a Ziploc

is sacrificing her house to build a school.
I worry where the bats will sleep

once her old canoes are sold.

– *Jennifer Chapis*

Jennifer Chapis is a Wilmington resident whose work has appeared in The New Yorker, McSweeney's, North American Review, American Letters & Commentary, BOMB, The Iowa Review, and over a hundred other magazines and anthologies. She served as full-time essay writing faculty at New York University for over a decade.

Tripp Engel

Brasserie du Soleil

Chef Tripp Engel, of Brasserie du Soleil in Lumina Station, grew up on a steady diet of North Carolina's seafood bounty on Oak Island. As a young teen, he caught the cooking bug and began working in area kitchens. Somewhere along the line, he discovered a passion for food, following his love of ingredient, technique and flavor combinations to Charleston, South Carolina, where he studied at Johnson and Wales University. During his time there, Charleston's wealth of fresh seafood inspired him further as he developed his voice as a chef in classes and kitchens around the area.

A post-graduation internship in Boston proved the gateway to his career as a chef.

"I worked with some great cooks in Boston and they really helped me with direction for my career, but also with opening doors and providing opportunities to learn more," he says.

One of those doors opened to New York City, where he worked at the prestigious Le Bernardin under Chef Eric Ripert. Ripert's impeccable French techniques sharpened Engel's, as quality and consistency in Le Bernardin's kitchen is a must. Engel soaked up all he could from the French master's seafood-centric menu (it shows on his bill of fare at Brasserie), but one of the most memorable dishes, says Engel, was Christmas supper.

"On Christmas, Eric always cooked something for his line and servers. A lot of the dishes came from his family and one in particular came from his grandmother. It was this roasted capon with foie gras and truffles, and it's a dish I'll always remember."

Capon may sound exotic, but it's really just a castrated rooster (the steer of the chicken world), so it gets big, fat and lazy, making the meat juicier and giving it a more intense flavor than chicken. Engel says you should be able to find a capon at Whole Foods or maybe order one from The Fresh Market. Same with the foie gras terrine; it's a popular holiday dish and you'll frequently see it at Whole Foods, The Fresh Market and even Harris Teeter. Rather than truffles, Engel substitutes a mix of wild mushrooms (available again at Whole Foods). Perfect as an accompaniment, in lieu of a standalone turkey breast, or as a wintertime main course, this dish will feed four really hungry people, or six to eight folks with normal appetites.

Three Chefs and the New Thanksgiving

By Jason Frye • Photographs by James Stefiuk

Now, with the ghost of Halloween finally behind us, comes Thanksgiving, a uniquely American holiday that almost always delivers the expected: a plate loaded with 3,000 calories of roasted turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes, all near-drowning in gravy; cranberry sauce (still in the shape of the can if you grew up like I did); and a heap of green beans for good measure. Don't forget the family squabbles. Or the pie. And definitely not the nap.

This year, break out of the mold and look at Thanksgiving, or almost any holiday for that matter, through a different set of eyes. A chef's eyes.

We spoke with three of Wilmington's most talented chefs to get their take on nontraditional holiday sides. The results were, well, delicious. Dishes range from the ambitious but easy to execute extra bird from Tripp Engel to a Bavarian-inspired stuffing from Jess Cabo to a trio of home-cook-friendly recipes from Tyson Amick. Read on, get inspired, and let us know how your dishes turn out.

Roasted Holiday Capon with Chestnut-Foie Gras Stuffing

1 6 lb. capon
1 cup country bread cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 cup milk
1 egg, lightly beaten
6 oz. foie gras terrine
6 oz. chopped chicken liver
1/2 lb. mixed mushrooms, diced
1 cup roasted chopped chestnuts
1 1/2 tablespoons minced garlic
2 tablespoons diced shallots
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1/2 teaspoon thyme leaves
1 tablespoon duck fat or butter
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon white pepper
2 cups chicken stock

Preheat the oven to 400°
Rinse the bird and dry it. Remove the wings with a sharp knife.
Soak the bread in the milk. Squeeze the excess milk from the bread and place the moist bread cubes in a large bowl. Add eggs, foie gras, chicken liver, mushrooms, roasted chestnuts, garlic, shallots, parsley, thyme and duck fat.
Season with salt and white pepper.
Season the inside of the capon with salt and pepper and fill with the stuffing.
Thread a trussing needle with kitchen string and sew the capon closed using a crisscross pattern.
Tie the legs together.
Season the bird on the outside with salt and pepper.
Place the wings in a roasting pan and set the capon on the wings
Roast for 90 minutes or until the juices run clear when the leg is pierced and the stuffing has reached at least 150°.
During cooking, baste the bird every 15–20 minutes to help crisp up the skin.
Remove the bird to a platter and let it sit for at least 10 minutes, longer if possible.
While the capon sits, remove excess grease from the roasting pan and de-glaze it with the chicken stock, scraping up all of the fond (brown bits in the pan). Strain through a fine mesh sieve and use to sauce the bird.

Pretzel Stuffing

15 pretzel buns
4 large sweet onions (Vidalia or walla walla)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 1/2 lbs. unsalted butter
1 lb. spicy sausage
1 head celery, medium diced
1 teaspoon chili flakes
2 quarts vegetable or chicken stock
1 tablespoon fresh chopped thyme
1 tablespoon fresh chopped rosemary
1 cup Dijon mustard
1 cup whole grain mustard
salt and pepper to taste

Leave pretzel buns out overnight until stale, or cut into 1-inch cubes and lightly toast in the oven.
Julienne (cut) onions into 1/4 inch strips.
Slowly caramelize onions in olive oil with 1/8 lb. butter over very low heat. (This step could take up to one hour to properly caramelize the onions without burning them)
Sauté crumbled sausage until cooked through. Drain grease.
Sauté celery with 1/8 lb. butter, season with salt, pepper and chili flakes. Cook for 5 minutes to keep it crunchy.
Warm remaining pound of butter, stock, herbs and whisk in both mustards until incorporated.
In a large bowl, combine pretzel bread cubes, sausage, celery mixture, 3/4 of caramelized onions. Stir in the stock until everything is combined and moist.
Grease a 9 x 13 casserole dish. Add stuffing mixture and top with remaining caramelized onions.
Bake covered in foil for 25 minutes at 375°. Remove foil and cook another 10–15 minutes or until the top begins to brown.

Jess Cabo

Cameron Art Museum's CAM Café

Jess Cabo's platinum hair makes a statement when she walks into the room, but what she really has to say is expressed on the plate. A force in the kitchen and an infamous party-thrower, Cabo found cooking the way people often find love — by accident. Growing up, she had no intentions of becoming a chef, and was enjoying a successful career as a headhunter in Los Angeles when a chance for cooking fell into her lap.

"I had a friend in casting and she told me this new reality show, *Hell's Kitchen*, was looking for people with a fiery personality and a passion for cooking. I met both requirements, so I went to the casting call. I think I was in the first dozen people they saw. They liked me, called me back and I went on the show with no prior cooking experience other than making meals for myself, friends and parties," says Cabo.

She did well, finishing third in the show's inaugural season.

After the show, she had job offers in kitchens around Los Angeles, but went back to her corporate job. She satisfied her need to cook by continuing to sharpen her technique cooking for herself and friends until several years later when she entered the restaurant world for good.

Not bad for someone self-taught.

Growing up in New York, Cabo spent many a day clamming in the Long Island Sound and in the bays that dot the island's north shore. She says she used to dig up clams, wash them in the water, shuck them right there and eat them off the tip of a knife. That primal, pure food experience set her eyes on cooking. Now, a pair of reality shows later (ask her about the other one yourself), she finds herself back in Wilmington (where she attended UNCW as an undergraduate) as executive chef at the Cameron Art Museum's CAM Café.

When we asked her to think about nontraditional sides, she immediately went for combining two things she loves: pretzels and stuffing. This dish brings together the sweet, unctuous qualities of slow-caramelized onions with the salt and tang of Dijon and whole-grain mustard by using pretzels as platform.

"In LA, my Thanksgiving dinner just kept getting bigger and bigger. I know this stuffing would've been a hit there," Cabo says.

TYSON amick

aubriana's

Tyson Amick is finally, and deservedly, in charge of his own kitchen. This long-time sous chef at the lauded Marc's on Market now heads up the kitchen at Aubriana's, the chic downtown eatery on South Front Street.

Growing up in Burlington, North Carolina, Amick comes from a family of non-chefs. Thanksgiving was always viewed as time for the traditional fixin's, but once he got a taste of the restaurant life, he started to view things a little differently.

In 1993, his family moved to Wilmington and he got his first restaurant job busing tables and washing dishes at a spot by the beach. From there, he moved to the Cape Fear Country Club, where he met his mentor and future boss, Marc Copenhaver.

"Marc saw some potential in me and taught me what it takes to be more than a cook, to be a chef. Under him, I just took in as much as I could and then practiced until I got it right," he says.

Amick estimates that 90 percent of his career was spent with Copenhaver either at the Country Club or at Marc's on Market. With a style that's French inspired with a Southern twist, his menu at Aubriana's shows the breadth of his technique and the depth of his influences. The three sides he gave us show the same.

"Since I've been cooking professionally, Thanksgiving with my family has changed," says Amick. "We're more creative now, and I always try to bring in a dish or two that plays with something familiar to all of us."

Familiarity and accessibility are key components to Amick's contributions, as they utilize some familiar ingredients like crescent rolls and Jiffy cornbread mix. Each one of his trio of dishes — chorizo-laced cornbread, fried green beans and a pumpkin dessert — builds on flavors we all know to create dishes that are sure to elevate your holiday sides.

Chorizo Cornbread with Goat Cheese

1 small pack fresh Mexican chorizo
1 box Jiffy cornbread mix
1/4 cup thinly sliced scallions
1/2 cup fresh chevre cheese
1 stick softened butter

Brown the chorizo over medium-high heat, using a wooden spoon to break it up into smaller bits as it cooks. Strain off fat and reserve sausage.
Mix cornbread according to box instructions.
Fold in the drained, crisped chorizo and the scallions.
Bake in the vessel of your choice, either a large cast iron skillet or individual portions. Follow box instructions for cook times. Once golden brown, remove and let cool slightly.
Freeze the chevre ahead of time to allow for easier crumbling (and less mess on your fingers).
When the cornbread is still warm, crumble cheese over the top. Serve with softened butter.

Pecan Fried Green Beans with Cranberry Dijonnaise

For the green beans: Select the best you can find. Younger green beans work best. Remove any strings from the beans before cooking
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup cornstarch
3 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
salt and white pepper to taste
1 cup cheap vodka
club soda as needed
1 cup raw pecans pulsed into a chunky powder in the food processor

To make batter, combine flour, cornstarch and peanut butter in a large bowl; add salt and pepper to taste, then add vodka. Alcohol evaporates much faster than water, so this addition to the batter will make it super crunchy.
Add club soda a little at a time until you reach a thick, creamy consistency.
Heat peanut oil in a pot or countertop fryer to 350°.
Carefully dip the green beans into the batter. As you pull them out, hold them to drain excess batter.
Sprinkle beans with pecans.
Slowly and carefully add beans to the hot oil, separating them as you go.
Fry in small batches until each bean is golden and floating, about 2 minutes. Drain on paper towels and season lightly with kosher salt immediately after removing.
(Keep a fine mesh skimmer on hand to remove excess batter and/or pecans from the oil, as these will burn and ruin the oil.)
Repeat until you are out of beans.
Serve with Cranberry Dijonnaise.

Cranberry Dijonnaise

2 cups cranberry juice
1/2 cup Craisins
2 cups Duke's mayonnaise
1/4 cup whole grain Dijon mustard
chopped fresh chives to taste

Put cranberry juice and Craisins on the stove in a small pot over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, then remove from the heat to "plump" the Craisins (you're essentially rehydrating them).
After about 15 minutes, remove Craisins from juice and reserve.
Place juice back on the heat and reduce over medium-high until reduced to around 2 tablespoons of syrup.
Cool.
Once the Craisins and syrup are cool enough to handle, place them in the food processor along with the other ingredients. Blend until smooth and uniform in color.
Keep your batter extremely cold by nesting your mixing bowl in a larger, ice-filled bowl or by adding ice cubes to the batter so long as you use the batter quickly, before the ice melts.

Pumpkin Croissants with Orange Marmalade Butter

3 cans Pillsbury Crescent Rolls
1 can pumpkin pie filling
1/2 lb. unsalted butter, cut into cubes and softened
1 jar orange marmalade

Open crescent rolls and unroll, laying them side-by-side on a piece of parchment or wax paper.
Spread the entire surface of each triangle with pumpkin pie filling. Carefully roll them up, not using too much pressure (too much pressure will squeeze the filling out the sides of each triangle)
Bake according to crescent roll instructions, then cool to room temperature.
To make the Orange Marmalade Butter:
Place softened butter in a mixing bowl, salt lightly with kosher salt, then spoon orange marmalade in. How much marmalade is up to your taste, but a 60/40 mix of butter to marmalade works well.
Stir gently, then spoon into small crocks for serving. Keep at room temperature for easy spreading.

Chasing Miss Chant

By Ashley Wahl

ELISABETH CHANT PAINTING ON LOCATION IN DELUTH, MINNESOTA, SUMMER OF 1900. COURTESY OF SHERRON BIDDLE.

Following her release from the asylum for the insane at Rochester State Hospital in December of 1920, Elisabeth Chant, who had worked as a muralist before being committed, traveled extensively through East Asia and the Philippines. When she returned to Springfield, Massachusetts, because of poor health, a doctor encouraged her to seek milder climate. She came to Wilmington by way of the Atlantic Coast Line railroad on January 12, 1922.

Tall and gaunt, she wore colorful tunics of her own creation and, according to art historian Claude Howell, "enormous plaits of chestnut hair over each ear."

More fascinating than her appearance, though, was her vision. At age 57, Elisabeth Chant moved to Wilmington with the intention of founding an art colony.

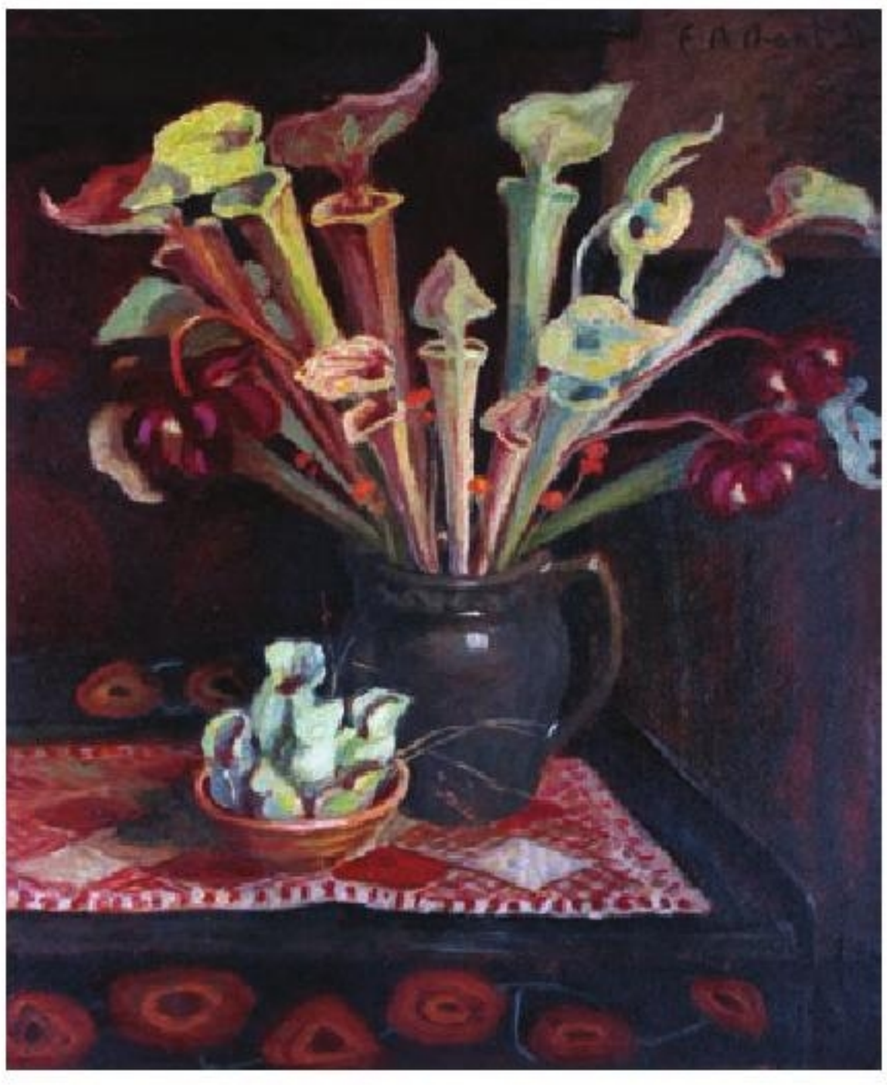
In *Violet and Gold* (1991), an account published by the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Henry Jay MacMillan paints a vivid picture of this sensitive, visionary artist:

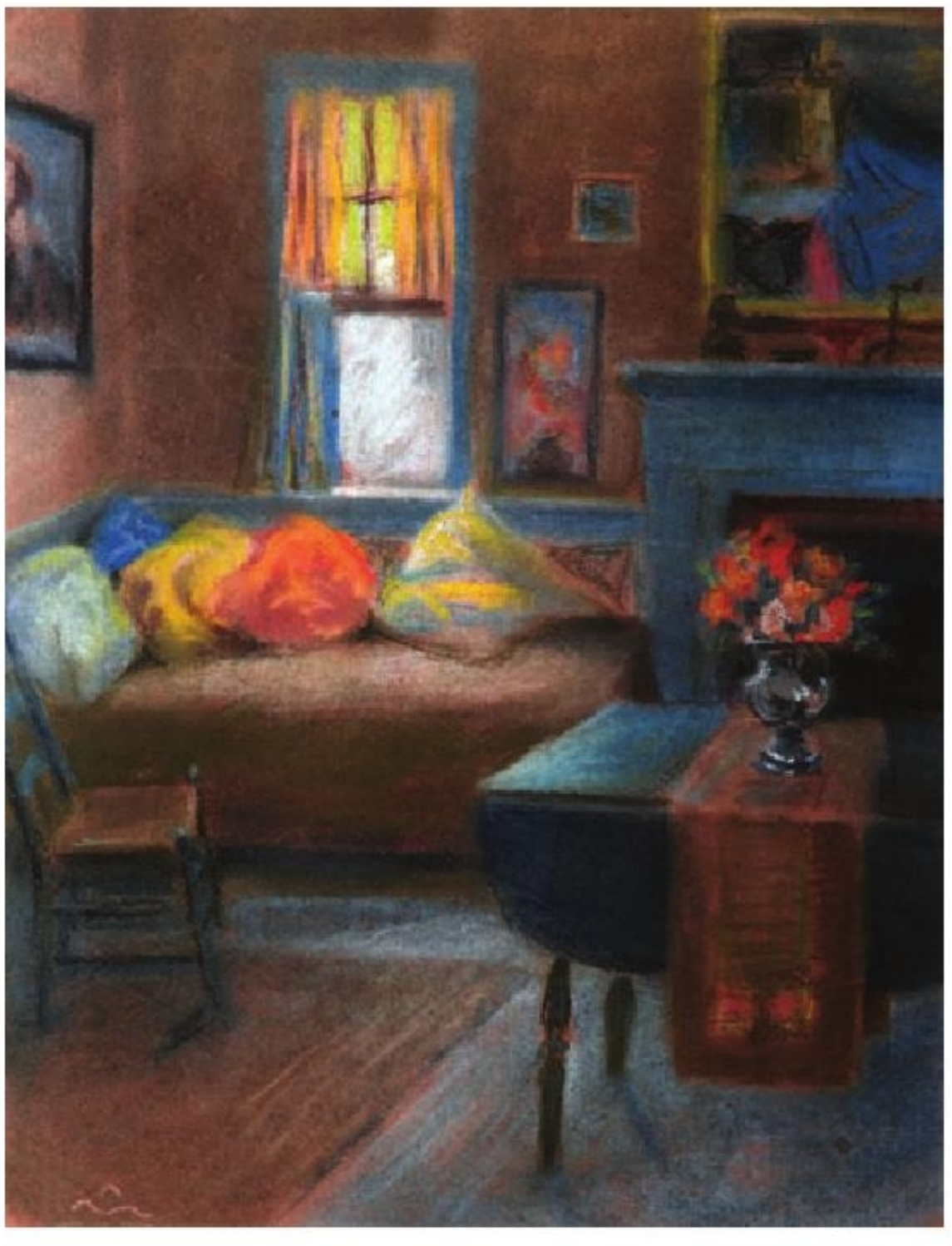
She first lived in the Orton Hotel but found the atmosphere incompatible. She said she was often awakened by angry voices and the sound of a pistol shot, always the same voice and the same shot. She was very attuned to the spirit world, and an unhappy aura was insupportable. She moved then to the north side of the top floor of the Kidder house on the southeastern corner of Third and Dock Streets. It was there she began accepting a few pupils, including myself.

Later that year, Chant moved to a small house on Cottage Lane and taught art classes at the nearby Hart carriage house, which had been used to store wine in the 1850s. She practiced mysticism, and enchanted students with quixotic and peculiar stories, such as her claim to have "sailed the seven seas by the age of seven." Some, like the relatives who had her committed, thought she was mad. Others saw her as a soft-spoken prophet. Nobody knew much about her former life.

Chant's own paintings showcase her mastery of design, but she was not an extraordinarily gifted artist. Her gift was teaching, and by inspiring those who came under her influence, she created something much more lasting than an arts colony. Here, in the little city nestled between a river and the ocean, Chant created a legacy.

Sixty-five years after her death, an exhibition at Cameron Art Museum (*From Gatehouse to Winehouse*, on display September 2012 through April, 2013) featured a reproduction of the Hart Wine House, which Chant's pupils considered to be the birthplace of Wilmington's cultural arts scene. The room looked just as MacMillan described it, with wide floor planks painted in muted colors, and contained a travel trunk packed with silken brocade, journals, and bright watercolors, like the one she reportedly brought to Wilmington and never unpacked.





When Executive Director Anne Brennan guided patrons through the space, she spoke about Chant as if she knew her personally, spinning a narrative so rich and captivating that it seemed a work of fiction.

Chant was born in Yeovil, a quiet town in Somersetshire, England, in 1865. Her father commanded a merchant sailing ship, plying between England, India and the Far East. His family joined him, and in 1873, they emigrated to the States, settling in Hawley, Minnesota, where Captain Chant took a job with the Northern Pacific Railroad. The winters were bitter cold. When Chant's mother died in 1878, her father moved the family to Minneapolis to find a new wife. Elisabeth, 13, was the oldest of nine children.

After graduating from nursing school to appease her stepmother, Chant enrolled at the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts, where she met Margarethe Heisser. After the Spanish-American War, during which Chant served as Chief Nurse, she and Heisser opened an art studio on Hennepin Avenue, which became the meeting place for the Minneapolis Arts and Craft Society. She made friends with prominent artists, thriving in what was then considered to be the cultural epicenter of the country, and eventually sailed to England, where she spent two years painting and studying her homeland.

Chant's father died in 1908, then Heisser, just two months later.

"The rapid succession of blows must have been devastating to the sensitive Chant," Brennan speculated, "and it's quite possible they ultimately contributed to a genuine mental breakdown in the years following her subsequent move to Massachusetts."

Her siblings had her arrested in 1917, and the court declared her insane. She was treated for manic depression in Rochester, Minnesota. When she moved to Wilmington, she did not speak about her family.

She died in 1947, and was buried in the Walker lot at Oakdale Cemetery.

Until about a decade ago, her past was shrouded in mystery.

In 1992, Saint John's Museum of Art (now Cameron Art Museum) began organizing an exhibition that would feature dozens of Chant's works, all donated by Henry MacMillan and Hester Donnelly, her former students. Brennan, then Curator of Collections, was asked to create the content for the exhibition catalogue.

"We knew very little about her," she says.

But the influence she exerted was almost everywhere to be seen. Her pupils became the driving forces behind the city's blossoming cultural scene. Donnelly had been one of the founders of Saint John's Museum. Claude Howell, who wrote extensively about Chant (his first art teacher) established the Art Department at UNCW. MacMillan was one of the incorporators of the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society. He was fascinated by Chant, and spent years of his life searching for clues about who she was before coming to Wilmington. As is evident by the letters she wrote him when he was away at camp one summer, Chant cared deeply for her students, and encouraged them to take their studies seriously. The prose is every bit as poetic and vibrant as the teacher.

"Through [MacMillan's] research, we knew that her ancestors were from Yeovil," says Brennan, but she was working with bread crumbs. "I nearly lost my job over this project because I was so late with the production."

On a research trip to Minnesota, Brennan "poured over microfilm and old newspapers" and found articles about Chant in *The Minneapolis Journal*, most of which referenced the studio on Hennepin Avenue where she and Heisser would entertain guests on Saturday afternoons. Like MacMillan, Brennan was unable to find the missing links to Chant's mysterious past.

In a letter addressed to MacMillan from Minneapolis, a librarian likened Chant to a Daphne du Maurier character.

"The flight that anyone could take with [Chant] is so rich," says Brennan.

A novelist might have easily filled in the blanks of Chant's life, but Brennan needed facts.

"I could not put this to bed. I had to know where she was born."

She ultimately went to England.

Brennan recalls the three-hour train ride from London to Yeovil, and being struck by the rustic beauty of the verdant countryside.

"It was a rainy day," says Brennan, and sheep dotted the green rolling hills like wild flowers. She paints the scene as Chant might have described it, with exquisite attention to detail and a heightened awareness of the present moment.

She arrived at the Yeovil Library at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and, having stated her purpose, was told to go to the Register of Deeds office, which closed in one hour.

"This was not a research trip," says Brennan. She would need to catch the train back to London that evening.

"Run," said the librarian.

At the Register of Deeds office, 3:45 p.m., she remembers the fake philodendron in the lobby, and the young couple — "they were just kids" — trying to get their marriage license before 4 o'clock.

Fortunately, Brennan was next in line. When she told the Register of Deeds about her research on Elisabeth Chant, and asked if he might be able to find her birth records, Mr. Shire, whom Brennan describes as an ancient man with a weary spirit and a pasty complexion, looked up at Brennan with "this ever so tiny spark of life."

He disappeared into a back room for a small eternity, then came back holding a large book.

"This is the entry I think you're looking for," he said.

Elisabeth Augusta Chant was born in Yeovil, Somersetshire, England to Captain James Chant and Elisabath Rowe Wills on March 10, 1865.

Back in Wilmington, Brennan was sitting in her basement office at Saint

John's Museum of Art on a Tuesday afternoon when the phone rang.

"I was deep in my research, trying to contextualize [Chant] within the Arts and Crafts Movement and flesh out who this person was before she moved to Wilmington," says Brennan.

The woman on the line, Sherron Biddle, had called up, looking for information on one of her relatives, Elisabeth Chant.

"I thought I had totally gone crazy," says Brennan, who admits she was so exhausted and frazzled by her pressing deadline that hallucinations wouldn't have been out of the question. "I had a relative of Elisabeth Chant on the phone. This is what Wilmington had been waiting for since [Chant's death in] 1947."

Biddle knew nothing of Brennan's research. The timing was purely serendipitous, though one wonders what Elisabeth Chant would have to say about that.

While her husband was busy at a conference in Washington, D.C. (they lived in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), Biddle had decided to explore the National Museum of Women in the Arts searching for information on her distant relative. There, in the museum's archives, was a file on Chant.

"The only thing in the file was a biographical sketch sent from Saint John's Museum of Art," says Brennan. Biddle called Brennan from a pay phone.

"We both launched into this conversation about Elisabeth Chant, and I kept thinking, if she hangs up the phone, I could lose her just as easily as she has found me," says Brennan.

Three days later, Biddle checked into a room at The Wine House Bed and Breakfast, where Chant used to teach. She brought family photographs and an oil painting of the *Cora Linn*, the ship that belonged to Chant's father.

For the entire weekend, Biddle and Brennan shared their research with one another, attempting to uncover the mysterious Chant. Over a period of hours, Elisabeth Chant emerged from her grave, violet aura burning bright, and her eccentric and visionary views bursting forth, as if her ghost were channeling itself through these two determined women.

"I feel as though we barely scratched the surface," says Brennan, who met her deadline, but remains endlessly fascinated by the artist known as Miss Chant.

"That was such an incredible time in my life, trying to find her."

The Gathering

A conversation about race that began over a meal has grown into a monthly gathering of faith and reconciliation

By Eric Porterfield • Photographs by Mark Steelman

Left to Right: Ernie Thompson, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church; James Utley, Jr., Bishop, The Love Center Church; Eric Porterfield, Pastor, Winter Park Baptist Church; Clifford D. Barnett, Pastor, Warner Temple AME Zion Church

We are a group of Wilmington pastors, four black and four white pastors when we're all together. We love to laugh, love to eat, and love to talk about our work. Most of all we treasure the friendships we have developed over the years.

Six years ago, First Presbyterian Church's pastor Ernie Thompson preached a sermon on racial reconciliation during which he confessed that he didn't know any of the black pastors in town. District Attorney Ben David, one of Ernie's parishioners, was at the time working with several black pastors in the aftermath of racial tensions that had emerged that spring. Ben and Ernie set up a meeting, with Ben inviting several black pastors and Ernie inviting several white pastors. Our group emerged from that meeting, becoming one of many groups who are working to bring blacks and whites together in Wilmington.

The pastors settle in for our monthly lunch gathering, this month at the First Baptist Church Activity Center on Independence Boulevard. Usually we discuss the ups and downs of life in our churches. On this day, though, not long after host pastor Matt Cook blesses the food and before the laughter has a chance to start, Pastor Rob Campbell of New Beginning Christian Church asks for time to share.

Three days ago, Pastor Campbell says, his son had been on the receiving end of hate-filled speech, spoken by people who knew nothing about him except that his skin color was darker than their skin color. Brent Campbell is a senior at UNCW, a finance major, and a captain of the track team. While he was working out alone on the intramural fields one late July afternoon, five young white men in a pickup truck drove by screaming racial insults, slurs and threats at Brent. There was no mistaking for whom the slurs were intended. Five minutes later the truck returned, minus three of its occupants. The driver identified himself by name, hurled another racial slur, and threatened violence if he ever saw Brent on the field again. One moment Brent was getting into his regular training routine, the next moment he was ripped from that routine by hate and prejudice.

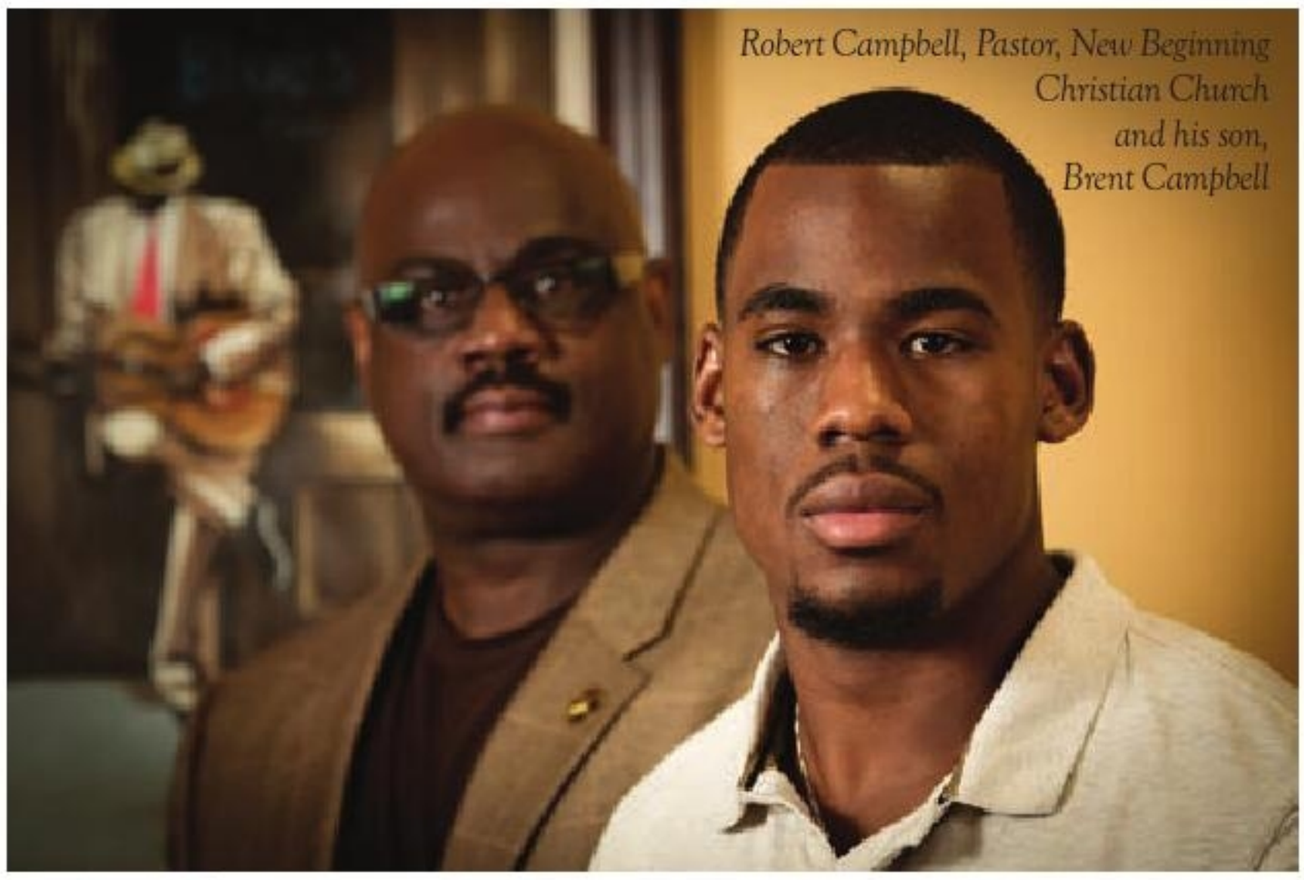
The pastors have long since forgotten about food as Rob shares the awful story. Our hearts are heavy, our minds filled with questions. We are angry. But this is not to be a conversation focused on what's wrong in the world.

Pastor Campbell shifts our attention from his son's remarkable response of grace to these young white men who had treated him with such cruelty. Rob reads us the letter Brent sent to the chancellor of the university, which concludes with these words referring to the driver of the truck: "He has only ever seen me, he has never known me. If he knew me, truly knew me, he would never have done those things . . . If he were found I would ask that his punishment be to get to know me. He should be forced to meet with me once a week for a month over lunch or dinner . . . If he could see my eagerness to forgive him, if he could come to know my struggles here at this school, if he could get a glimpse of the person that I am . . . he would find, in all of that, the solution. That is how you change a heart. That is how we could grow to become a unified campus. That is how UNCW could come to achieve authentic racial reconciliation."

Two months later, on a Monday morning, I'm sipping a cup of coffee at the "Wag," the main dining hall on campus at UNCW. I watch students come and go, thinking ahead six to ten years when my three boys might be in a school like this, strolling into the dining hall for a quick breakfast before heading to class. Brent Campbell joins me with his food, completely comfortable telling his uncomfortable story. It's the first time I've met Brent, but I feel like I know him already. His smile, his laugh, and most of all his integrity remind me of his father.

I come prepared to talk about the "incident," but I'm surprised by the larger context of Brent's story. In middle school, Brent tells me, he remembers working closely with his white peers in the classroom, but being told with great clarity that he could not visit their homes. As a high school student-athlete, he recalls racial stereotypes projected on him by both black and white classmates. He also speaks of college classmates choosing to be involved elsewhere when he "integrates" what had previously been an all-white group. There is no bitterness or anger in his voice, only sadness and hurt.

As Brent speaks I am aware that my boys probably will never be unwelcome at a classmate's home on account of the color of their skin. They will never have to struggle with their racial identity. And should one of my boys run track at UNCW sometime ten years from now, most likely he will never be taunted with



Robert Campbell, Pastor, New Beginning Christian Church and his son, Brent Campbell

racial slurs and threats.

Soon we're talking about our shared faith, a 45-year-old white preacher and a 21-year-old preacher's kid saying "Amen!" back and forth to each other over coffee and grits. We celebrate our belief that, as God's children, we are brothers. It is clear that Brent's gracious response to the white men who taunted him is rooted in his faith.

Brent shares that over a year ago he entered a process of more "authentically following Jesus." He soon met a young white man named Andrew Givens, the campus director for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IV). Andrew is leading UNCW's IV chapter to focus on racial diversity, and Brent quickly joined in this work. Then six months ago he "prayed for a new heart" with which to love people as Jesus loves them.

Through all of these events, Brent was receiving a call, a commissioning to get to know and love his fellow white students on campus. It was not that Brent had any hatred to confess; instead, it was a journey of vocational clarity, a discovery that part of his mission in life is to be an agent of racial reconciliation — on campus, for now, and wherever he goes in the future.

Without realizing it, Brent had been preparing to love these five young white men long before they taunted him. So he felt sadness for them more than anger at them. He wanted to know them, not punish them.

As Brent spoke, I realized that he was the teacher and I was the student. He was the pastor and I was the parishioner.

It's been four days since my conversation with Brent. I keep reflecting on my internal response: I was shocked more by the prejudice he experienced in middle school than by the racial slurs launched at him from the pickup truck. Why?

A memory that I have been trying to retrieve suddenly comes to light. Finally, I'm able to recall the experience Brent's story has unearthed, a story I've kept buried for over thirty years. I'm back in my hometown of Greensboro, a seventh-grader on a school bus heading home after a long day at Kiser Junior High School. There is one black student on the bus, all other occupants are white.

I hear and see the bully taunt my black classmate and neighbor. Some of the other students join him. I hear the cruel jokes. I hear the "N" word tossed about casually, as if it were perfectly OK and acceptable to say it. With devastating effect, the word communicates the contempt with which the white bully holds his black classmate.

I know that what's happening is wrong. I know I should do something to defend my black classmate, stand up for his humanity, and show him that he has a friend on this bus. At this moment I am less than one year removed from an incredibly rich sixth-grade experience at Mount Zion Elementary School, made rich in large part because of the school's wonderful racial diversity. At this moment I'm a member of the Central YMCA basketball travel team, where black and white players have formed a remarkable bond on and off the court. I, of all the kids on the bus, should do something. But I do nothing.

From my window seat I see the face of my black classmate as he gets off the bus, flipping the bird at his tormenters as the bus drives away. But beneath the righteous anger on his face there is sadness, and deep, deep hurt. I can't recall the faces of anyone else from those bus rides of long ago, but I can't forget the hatred in the face of my white classmate, the pain in the face of my black classmate, and the fact that I just sat there and watched.

The pastors gather for lunch again, this time at First Baptist Missionary Church on the corner of North Fifth Avenue and Campbell Street. Pastor John Veasey is our host. The laughter flows freely as always. But soon we turn to the day's work: planning our upcoming "Conversation on Race: Seeing Each Other Through the Lens of the Gospel." Ten members from our eight churches will gather on the first four Tuesday nights of October. Eight chairs will be at ten tables, with a member from each church at each table. The pastors will make presentations, and then around the tables black and white sisters and brothers will talk about race in the context of their shared faith. On the third Tuesday night it will be my honor to interview Brent Campbell as he shares his story with the group.

We move easily into sensitive subjects that black and white folks often have difficulty discussing. There is a trust in the room; it's a safe place to speak openly and ask questions. "As a black person, how do you feel when you see this . . . ?" "As a white person, how do you respond when you hear this . . . ?" We hope to create an environment on these Tuesday night gatherings where our church members, black and white, can have similar conversations.

I look across the table at Pastor Rob Campbell, whose son I now know. I am thankful for his grace-filled commitment to racial reconciliation, and for the privilege of partnering with him and many others in this work. I am thankful that Brent is following in his father's footsteps, moving those steps in new and powerful directions at UNCW.

And I am thankful that at this table, with these friends, I have a safe place to say, "When I was in seventh grade, a black classmate was treated with great cruelty by white students, and I . . ."

Eric Porterfield is the senior pastor at Winter Park Baptist Church in Wilmington.

The Hot Ticket

Cucalorus For Beginners

Cannes is much bigger. Toronto and Sundance, too. But with screenings of more than 200 films from around the globe scheduled for this year's festival, Cucalorus has become an attraction. The 2013 Cucalorus Film Festival happens November 13–17, and will draw thousands of filmmakers, artists and underground movie buffs to downtown Wilmington to celebrate art and encourage creative exchange in a non-competitive, non-threatening environment. While it has certainly evolved from the cliquish, underground arts scene that it used to be, it is still easy for Cucalorus newbies to feel intimidated. Don't be. All film lovers are welcome, and with nearly 65 features and 150 short films to choose from, there is something for everyone.

And if it's the massive selection of films that you find overwhelming — you can search for films by program or genre on their easily navigable website — we've got you covered. The Cucalorus powers-that-be recently sent us their impressive 2013 lineup, organized by program: Magnolia, Vanguard, Voices, Works-in-Progress, and Midnight Madness. When we asked them if they might craft an exclusive "Hot Ticket" list of this year's must-see films, however, the film junkies couldn't do it. "We think they're all must-sees," they replied. So here's a handful of films we think will be fan favorites. Perhaps one will pique your interest — or inspire you to explore the realm of Cucalorus for yourself. Screening tickets are $10/regular, $15/premium.

For a complete schedule and more information, visit www.cucalorus.org.

Magnolia

Crowd-pleasing fare from romantic comedies to fascinating documentaries. A showcase of the finest films from the festival circuit.

Redwood Highway,
Narrative feature directed by Gary Lundgren

When: Saturday, November 16, 4 p.m.
Venue: Thalian Hall, Main Stage, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington

Seventy-six-year-old Marie (Shirley Knight) hasn't seen the Oregon coast in more than forty-five years. When she learns that her granddaughter is planning a beach wedding, Marie recalls painful memories and gets into an unfortunate argument with her son (James LeGros). Something happened decades ago, and as the anniversary of the event approaches, Marie is faced with a dilemma: Should she attend the wedding or keep herself at a distance? Wanting to do things on her own terms, she leaves her southern Oregon retirement community to walk the eighty-mile journey to the coast along the fabled Redwood Highway. Her sudden disappearance causes her family and authorities to fear the worst, but Marie is off on a grand adventure where she meets an extraordinary cast of characters, including Pete (Tom Skerritt) and a lion. She ultimately discovers that you're never too old to learn about life — or yourself. Running time: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

Pioneer,

Narrative feature directed by Erik Skjoldbjaerg
When: Saturday, November 16, 7 p.m.
Venue: Thalian Hall, Main Stage, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington

At the onset of the Norwegian oil boom in the early 80s, enormous oil and gas deposits are discovered in the North Sea. A professional diver named Petter, obsessed with reaching the bottom of the Norwegian Sea, is the ideal candidate for a mission that involves bringing the oil ashore through a pipeline from depths of 500 meters. Petter is sent on a perilous journey during which he loses sight of who is pulling the strings. Gradually he realizes that he is in way over his head and that his own life is at stake. A conspiracy thriller sure to keep you on the edge of your seat. Running time: 1 hour, 46 minutes.

Vanguard

Breathtaking works from pioneering directors, independent excellence from new and emerging artists.

Black Box,

Narrative feature directed by Stephen Cone
When: Thursday, November 14, 7 p.m.
Venue: Thalian Hall, Black Box, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington

A strong-willed graduate student directs a group of fresh-faced undergrads in a stage adaptation of a Gothic 1980s, young adult novel, a process that alters them all in unexpected ways. The arrival of the book's author only furthers the ensemble's journey into the very personal, very real origins of narrative. Lead actress Josephine Decker, is among *Filmmaker Magazine's* "25 New Faces of Independent Film." Running time: 1 hour, 20 minutes.

Boy Eating the Bird's Food,

Narrative feature directed by Ektoras Lygizos
When: Friday, November 15, 4:15 p.m. & Saturday, November 17, 10:30 a.m.
Venue: City Stage, 21 North Front Street, Wilmington

A 22-year-old boy in Athens, Greece, has no job, no money, no girlfriend and no food to eat, but he's got a canary and a beautiful singing voice. When he becomes homeless, the boy must seek shelter for his bird. And when the bird gets trapped inside the shelter, he reaches out for help. Pigs — we eat them. Cows — we eat them and take their milk. Sheep — we take the wool. Dogs, our guardians, protect our houses. Canaries? They are completely useless: We feed them, we water them, and all they do is sing. Announced as this year's Greek submission to the Academy Awards, *Boy Eating the Bird's Food* is competing for Best Foreign Film at the 2014 awards show. Running time: 1 hour, 20 minutes.

Bob Birdnow's Remarkable Tale of Human Survival and the Transcendence of Self,

Narrative feature directed by Eric Steele
When: Saturday, November 16, 4:30 p.m.
Venue: City Stage, 21 North Front Street, Wilmington

Two old friends reunite at a sales conference in Dubuque, Iowa, where Bob (Barry Nash), a reluctant motivational speaker, shares a personal story with the conference attendees who work for Jerry (Robert Longstreet). The story takes an unexpected path when Bob — an ex-pilot with one arm and one leg — is forced off-script and begins to recount the event that forever changed his life and relationship with Jerry. This experimental film premiered at the Hamptons International Film Festival in October 2013. Running time: 1 hour, 14 minutes.

Voices

Socially aware and politically challenging, a showcase of powerful messages about significant sociopolitical issues from around the world.

How to Lose Your Virginity,

Documentary feature directed by Therese Shechter
When: Friday, November 15, 4:30 p.m.
Venue: Thalian Hall, Black Box, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington

This hilarious, eye-opening, occasionally alarming documentary uses the filmmaker's own path out of virginity to explore its continuing value in

our otherwise hypersexualized society. Layering vérité interviews and vintage sex-ed films with candid self-reflection and wry narration, Shechter reveals myths, dogmas and misconceptions behind this "precious gift." Sex educators, porn producers, abstinence advocates, and outspoken teens share their own stories of having — or not having — you-know-what. Running time: 1 hour, 6 minutes.

In So Many Words,

Documentary feature directed by Elisabeth Haviland James
When: Sunday, November 17, 4:15 p.m.
Venue: Thalian Hall, Black Box, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington

Lucy Daniels believes that a family secret her sister told her when she was 4 years old radically impacted the trajectory of her life, and set in motion a life-long debilitating mental illness. Born into a prominent and powerful newspaper-magnate family, from an early age Lucy defined her worth by her ability to write. Despite early success, she was struck with severe anorexia and subjected to brutal treatment in mental institutions, only to survive, pen her first best-seller, and ultimately win a Guggenheim Prize in literature — all before the age of 22. Running time: 1 hour, 17 minutes.

Works-in-Progress

Unfinished works brought to you in an informal setting; filmmakers share their secrets and seek input.

Freedom Fighters,

Documentary project directed by Jamie Meltzer
When: Saturday, November 16, 1:30 p.m.
Venue: Jengo's Playhouse, 815 Princess Street, Wilmington

A new detective agency in Dallas, Texas, is founded by a group of exonerated men, with decades in prison served between them. They call themselves the Freedom Fighters, and they are looking to free innocent people still behind bars. This character-driven documentary follows these change-makers as they rebuild their lives and families, learn to investigate cases, work to support each other, and campaign to fix the criminal justice system. Fun fact: Director Jamie Meltzer came to Cucalorus in 2012 with his film *The Informant.*

Rodents of Unusual Size,

Documentary project directed by Chris Metzler, Jeff Springer, and Quinn Costello
When: Saturday, November 16, 4:30 p.m.
Venue: Jengo's Playhouse, 815 Princess Street, Wilmington

The fragile wetlands of Louisiana are under relentless attack by legions of twenty-pound semi-aquatic invasive rodents known as nutria, which have greatly accelerated coastal erosion and made the bayou much more vulnerable to hurricanes. Keeping the giant swamp rats at bay are a group of colorful and off-beat residents, who are in the midst of defending their land, culture and way of life. This documentary tells the story of how invasive species, environmental issues and a unique group of people are colliding at the edge of the world in an attempt to restore and protect coastal Louisiana before it disappears.

Midnight Madness

Cinematic visions for the night crowd, a mash-up of sex, horror and the bizarre. For mature audiences only.

Borgman,

Narrative feature directed by Alex Van Warmerdam
When: Friday, November 15, 10 p.m.
Venue: Thalian Hall, Main Stage, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington

A vagrant enters the lives of an arrogant upper-class family, turning their lives into a psychological nightmare in the process. Announced as this year's submission to the Academy Awards from the Netherlands, *Borgman* is competing for Best Foreign Film at the 2014 awards show. Running time: 1 hour, 55 minutes.

Blue Ruin,

Narrative feature directed by Jeremy Saulnier
When: Saturday, November 16 & Sunday, November 17, 10:15 p.m.
Venue: Thalian Hall, Main Stage, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington

This classic American revenge story recently won the FIPRESCI International Critics Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, where it screened in the Directors' Fortnight. The film follows a mysterious outsider whose quiet life is turned upside down when he returns to his childhood home to carry out an act of vengeance. Proving himself an amateur assassin, he winds up in a brutal fight to protect his estranged family. Running time: 1 hour, 32 minutes.

Recommended Itineraries

We challenge you try one of these recommended itineraries, amend to fit your tastes, or create one that is entirely your own.

1) The Sampler:
Five films in four days

The Sampler allows you to experience one must-see film from each program, and lets you savor Cucalorus one glorious day at a time.

Thursday, November 14
7 p.m. – *Black Box* (Vanguard), Thalian Hall, Black Box Theater

Friday, November 15
10 p.m. – *Borgman* (Midnight Madness), Thalian Hall, Main Stage

Saturday, November 16
1:30 p.m. – *Freedom Fighters* (Work-in-Progress), Jengo's Playhouse
4 p.m. – *Redwood Highway* (Magnolia), Thalian Hall, Main Stage
7 p.m. – *Pioneer* (Magnolia), Thalian Hall, Main Stage
*Pick one Magnolia film

Sunday, November 17
4:15 p.m. – *In So Many Words* (Voices), Thalian Hall, Black Box Theater

2) The Weekend Rambler:
Six films in less than 48 hours

Now that the work week's done, celebrate with two days of festival mayhem. Stuck working? Consider calling in sick.

Saturday, November 16
1:30 p.m. – *Freedom Fighters*, Jengo's Playhouse
4 p.m. – *Redwood Highway*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage; 4:30 p.m. – Bob *Birdnow's Remarkable Tale of Human Survival and the Transcendence of Self*, City Stage, or *Rodents of Unusual Size*, Jengo's Playhouse
7 p.m. – *Pioneer*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage
10:15 p.m. – *Blue Ruin*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage

Sunday, November 17
10:30 a.m. – *Boy Eating the Bird's Food*, City Stage
4:15 p.m. – *In So Many Words*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage

3) The Marathon:
Nine recommended films, plus whatever else you can squeeze into your frenzied schedule.

In a few words: Watch everything you can. Consider grabbling meals in between screenings at your favorite downtown eateries. Sleep is optional; coffee recommended.

Thursday, November 14
7 p.m. – *Black Box*, Thalian Hall, Black Box Theater

Friday, November 15
4:15 p.m. – *Boy Eating the Bird's Food*, City Stage
10 p.m. – *Borgman*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage

Saturday, November 16
1:30 p.m. – *Freedom Fighters*, Jengo's Playhouse
4 p.m. – *Redwood Highway*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage; 4:30 p.m. – *Bob Birdnow's Remarkable Tale of Human Survival and the Transcendence of Self*, City Stage; or 4:30 p.m. – *Rodents of Unusual Size*, Jengo's Playhouse
7 p.m. – *Pioneer*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage
10:15 p.m. – *Blue Ruin*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage

Sunday, November 17
10:30 a.m. – *Boy Eating the Bird's Food*, City Stage
4:15 p.m. – *In So Many Words*, Thalian Hall, Main Stage

Thoroughly Modern Family

For the Lewis children, this Forest Hills home is the ideal place to learn and grow. And it's perfectly theirs

By Anne Barnhill · Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

The Lewis children, all smiles. From left to right: Pearce, Will, and Sanders.

Forest Hills Drive is a quiet street lined with large, stately homes, each with perfectly manicured lawns. Live oaks dribble with Spanish moss, and there is a feeling of spaciousness as one large yard yields to another. Most of the homes were built in the 1950s and 60s, and to travel down the road is to feel as if you are stepping into a calmer, more predictable time.

When arriving at 708 Forest Hills Drive, home of Dr. and Mrs. Lance Lewis, the feeling of peace continues through the wrought-iron gates, up the long driveway to the beautiful brick manor house. Then, however, the observant visitor will note something slightly different, something a tiny bit out of the ordinary. There, at the entranceway, is a bright green pumpkin vine, complete with enormous yellow-orange blooms. Meredith Lewis explains:

"The children wanted to grow their own pumpkins this fall. Pumpkins need a lot of light and, though we tried to find a spot in the backyard, this was really the best place for the vine — so, we planted it right here."

With that simple explanation, the heart of what is known locally as "the Williams' House" is revealed. This house, while an architectural splendor, is really an elaborate home, school and playground for the three Lewis children, Pearce, 11, Will, 10, and Sanders (aka Pip), 7.

"We are the third family to own the house, but the first family to have small children here," says Meredith Lewis. "We've been in the house for nine years, so this really is home for the kids." Evidence of the children can be found throughout the house, but the yard is particularly revealing. The front lawn is large enough to play football or toss a Frisbee, which the Lewises do frequently. The mown area is surrounded by woods and there is a path cutting through to an arched bridge built by Lance Lewis, a cardiologist at Cape Fear Heart Associates. The children have three acres to explore. One of their discoveries came when the first owner's son, Dr. Bertram Williams, visited the house. Dr. Williams was able to show the Lewis children some secret slate steps in the garden, which they, in turn, share with pride. Will, the only son and middle child, is curious about where the steps might have led.

"Probably to a special garden or a place they really liked," he speculates.

Near the "secret" steps is Pip's tree, a large maple with a story.

"When I was expecting Pip, I was pulling weeds in this part of the yard and there were several saplings," Meredith Lewis says. "This one would not come up, no matter how hard I tried. I decided to leave it and we've always called it Pip's tree. I've also planted a peach tree and pear tree for Pearce and Will. I want them to consider this place their home, always."

Walking around the house to the backyard, one finds a small vegetable and herb garden directly off the kitchen. All the better to cook with, Meredith and the children agree. Most likely, two friendly dogs, Daisy, a King Charles spaniel, and Snowball, a Great Pyrenees, will amble to the backyard in accompaniment, creating an energetic pack of children and dogs.

The backyard is spectacular. Spacious patios cling to the house, furnished with comfy lounge chairs with black and white-striped cushions. There is a covered porch off the back foyer where two swings face each other under the shade.

From the moment they saw it, Meredith and Lance Lewis knew the brick manor house on Forest Hills Drive would make the perfect home sweet home.

The back foyer, which opens to a covered porch and an enchanting view of the backyard, is where the Lewis children have school.

"We discovered that if you stand at just the right place and call upstairs, it sounds as if you are right next each other. It's really fun."

Meredith's various collections make dazzling displays in the elegant living room, where the children practice piano and Pearce's portrait is mounted by the fireplace.

"This back foyer is where we have school," says Meredith. "Five years ago, we decided home-schooling was best for us. When Pearce started school, I felt like all I was doing was 'rushing and hushing.' That's not the way we wanted to live. We wanted to slow things down and enjoy our children while they are young. The way it was before, they had no time for playing or reading. Now, we have this sweet time together and this is their playground."

She continues, "Just last week, we had two hummingbirds fluttering behind our heads while we were eating lunch. At first, we couldn't figure out what the noise was but soon we caught sight of them out of the corners of our eyes. We laughed — this is just so much more pleasant than having lunch in a noisy cafeteria."

And some playground it is. The focal point of the backyard is a water fountain circled by a precisely clipped boxwood hedge. A rose garden stands to the left and other flowering bushes are planted throughout the space. The effect is that of an English garden. And, like many parts of the house and yard, the fountain has a story.

"We had portraits painted of each of the children in a particular place in the yard," says Meredith. "When Pearce was four, we wanted to have hers done by the fountain. The artist came to take pictures of Pearce and we, along with some other children, were having a good time. Suddenly, the old fountain came crashing down. Thankfully, no one was hurt." However, she explains, they would have to replace the old fountain with something else in order to have Pearce's portrait done the way they wanted it. So, they did replace it. And a lovely portrait of Pearce now hangs in the living room. But there was still a problem; the fountain would not work.

"We had that fountain repaired at least twice. Everyone tried to fix it but it just wouldn't work. This year, we had the garden tour coming up and still, no working fountain. Finally, my husband, who is a cardiologist, took a look at

Green walls and Blue Willow china for the dining room, where Will's portrait overlooks the table.

The Lewises kept their promise. Previous homeowners told Lance and Meredith that this house could be theirs so long as they never painted over the powder room mural.

the fountain. He determined there must be a blockage somewhere and so he did a 'bypass' and fixed the fountain. It's worked ever since," says Meredith.

Though the fountain is grand, it isn't the most noticeable element in the elegant yard. That prize goes to the chickens at the back corner. And their stylish coop.

"We've had the chickens for about four years, though this is our third flock," Meredith explains. "Foxes, hawks, raccoons and dogs have been rough on these animals. Both my sisters have chickens and we thought it would be great for the kids to learn responsibility. They take care of the chickens, feeding them and gathering the eggs."

"We get about four eggs a day," adds Will with pride.

The chickens are extremely fluffy-looking and each is named after a flower.

"These are Cochin and Frizzle mix chickens. They are a friendly breed, something important to us. They'll come up and greet you almost the way a dog will," says Lewis.

Besides chickens, visitors will also find three rabbits: Skippy, Coffee Bean and Snowflake. They have a spacious hutch and seem perfectly at home in the menagerie. However, not all the animals in the yard are tame.

"We have lots of birds and there is a butterfly garden. We once had a heron's nest and we found one of the shells in the yard. We knew the babies had hatched," Meredith explains. "I love having animals here. It brings life to the yard."

To the right of the chicken coop, Lance Lewis has created a zip line for the children, which they happily demonstrate. There is a basketball goal and a playhouse,

complete with a loft and flower boxes at the windows. The playhouse is the scene for tea parties with special guests, like the brown stuffed bear who sits at the tiny table, waiting for the party to begin.

At the very back center of the yard is a single bench where the Azalea Festival queen was photographed and the Lewis family now refers to it as the "queen's bench." But the Azalea queen isn't the only celebrity to have visited the home.

"Dr. Williams told us that back in the late 50s or sometime in the 60s, when the house appeared frequently on the garden tour, Ronald Reagan stood in the yard. He was still an actor and was dating the Azalea queen. Now that story is part of the house's history," says Meredith.

This year, the house was once again on the garden club tour. In fact, it was the site of the ribbon-cutting. Even the children gave tours.

The house itself is commodious with approximately 5,000 square feet of living space, plus a floored attic with its own cedar closet, and a full basement for storage.

"We have to be careful not to fill the house to capacity," notes Meredith.

Not always easy for a collector, she admits. Scattered throughout the home are old leather books, Staffordshire dogs, salt cellars, sea glass, Blue Willow china, and old rolling pins.

The rolling pins are displayed in the Lewises' newly remodeled kitchen, a spacious area with floor-to-ceiling cabinets and a long island with marble countertops where the children do their homework or put together jigsaw puzzles, help chop vegetables from the garden and make cookies.

"We spend a lot of time here, so we wanted it to be comfortable," says Meredith. "It's been nice to make the kitchen ours."

When the Lewis family first moved to Wilmington, they wanted to find the right house to make "theirs." But that's hard to do, when the perfect house isn't on the market.

"We drove past the house and looked at each other," Meredith recalls. "We knew it was the house for us, knew right away. We backed the car up and knocked on the door of Peter and Elise Ruffin. We told them we loved their home and would like to buy it. It was perfect timing because they were thinking of selling. The house never did go on the market. And, when people would introduce us, it was always 'Meet the Lewises-they-bought-Peter-and-Elise's-house," says Meredith, smiling at the memory.

"We drove past the house and looked at each other," Meredith recalls. "We knew it was the house for us, knew right away."

In the newly-remodeled kitchen, the children do homework and help cook, putting that spacious, marble-topped island to good use.

When the Ruffins lived here, they changed the six upstairs bedrooms to four. The result: an enormous master suite.

It was the Ruffins who changed the six upstairs bedrooms to four, creating an enormous master suite with several closets, one the size of a room. A needlepoint blue and white rug covers the hardwood floors on one side of the suite and a large bed commands center stage. A sitting room completes the setting.

Across the hall are the children's bedrooms, each with its own full bath. Pearce's room was recently redone, changing color from girlish shades of pink to a more mature blue, with a large fuzzy, white rug good for lying on the floor, reading or listening to music.

"I wanted to surprise Pearce," says Meredith, "so while she was away at camp, a friend and I redid the room."

Will's room is manly, with an antique bed from the Orton Plantation giving the space a stalwart feel. Here, ship models and other toys are stacked neatly on the shelves. But it is Pip's room that has a little something extra. Beside her room is the Book Nook, a small room the size of a walk-in closet. It has a window to let in the light and a view to the garden below. There is a built-in bed and a very tall bookshelf filled with children's books. It's the perfect place to escape and allow a story to carry the kids away on myriad adventures.

Next to the Book Nook is another small room — the wardrobe. Inside, various costumes and a mirror make this the perfect place to play dress-up.

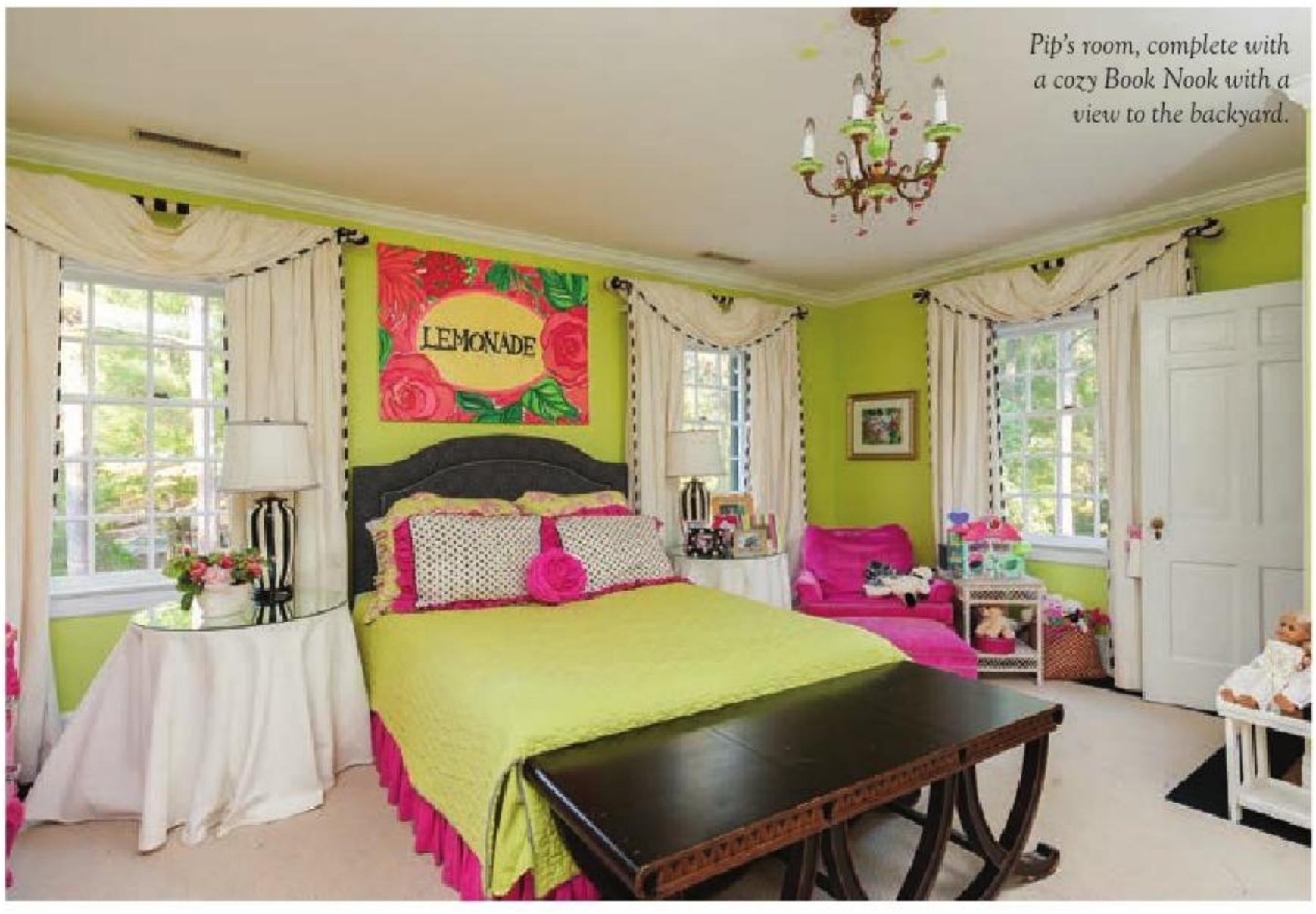
To go downstairs, you have three choices, as there are three staircases.

"When he built the house, Mr. Williams had lived through the Great Depression. He thought if he built the house so it could be split into apartments, he would be able to generate income if there was ever another depression," explains Meredith.

The central stairway is the most spectacular, a wide, curved set of steps that adds to the elegance of the home. And, there's a certain spot at the bottom of the stairs that's magic.

"We discovered that if you stand at just the right place and call upstairs, it sounds as if you are right next to each other. It's really fun."

Pearce's room, once girlish pink, has evolved into a chic, stylish space fit for a young lady.



Pip's room, complete with a cozy Book Nook with a view to the backyard.

The view from the covered porch or back patio is spectacular. This is where the Lewis children play.

To the right of the stairs as you come down is the large, elegant living room. There's a piano at one end where the children practice.

"We use every part of the house — there are no off-limits spots."

The gathering room for the family, apart from the kitchen, is the den, a small room paneled with pickled pine. Over the fireplace is Pip's portrait and leaning in each corner are the family tartans, hung on large poles.

"We belong to First Presbyterian Church and they have a day each year when families can bring their tartans. I decided since this was the family room, we should leave ours up all year. One is for Robertson and one for McGregor. I like this room because it's so cozy and our family spends a lot of time together in here."

Off the family room is the powder room, which is painted like a Renaissance bedchamber with a mural of long, green drapes and other ornamentation.

"When we bought the house, the owners said they'd sell it to us as long as we promised never to paint over this mural. We promised and we never will."

The dining room is on the opposite side of the center stairs and is filled with the Blue Willow collection. A portrait of Will overlooks the table, an appropriate placement for a growing boy.

The children have made apple muffins and are anxious to share them. Sitting at the island in the kitchen, eating the muffins and drinking iced tea, the comfort and warmth of the family are evident. Though the house requires a lot of attention, as older structures are wont to do, this house is definitely a home.

"The house is very special, but it does take a lot of work to maintain," says Meredith. "But we love it — we're here to stay. We're thankful to have settled here in Wilmington."

Anne Clinard Barnhill's forthcoming novel, Queen Elizabeth's Daughter, *will be released from St. Martin's Press in March, 2014. She is the author of three other books along with a poetry chapbook.*

Even the chickens live in style — and each one is named after a flower.

The backyard playhouse is tea party central.

ALMANAC

November

"The thinnest light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of." – Henry David Thoreau

By Noah Salt

Why We Love Wind Monath

According to Emily Dickinson, that famously shut-in wet blanket, November is the Norway of months, which may explain why so many people claim to dislike it. The days are colder, the nights longer, the furnace kicks on, the heating bill rises, rainy days seem extra dreary, and on and on. The ancient Anglo-Saxons, poor Emily's ancestors, called November "Wind Monath" owing to its cold gray winds and driving rain. "November's sky is chill and drear," agreed Sir Walter Scott, "November's leaf is red and sear." In November, essayist Joseph Addison noted, the people of England hang and drown themselves.

We at the *Salt* Almanac, on the other hand, submit that November is the perfect month for catching one's breath for the coming holidays, taking stock and tidying up the garden and workshop. First frost in these parts generally holds off until about November 1, which means the weather is often quite pleasant for outside activities, perfect for an afternoon of pruning dead limbs off fruit trees, raking the yard a final time, digging up onions and potatoes, and putting in the last flowering bulbs and winter greens. Kale is the uber-vogue green this autumn. But we still love our collards. The first batches of both should be ready by middle month.

Here on winter's doorstep, an old English maxim holds that thick onion skins herald a cold winter, and this year's Farmers' Almanac has already gone on record declaring a potential winter for the record books, blustery and cold and unusually snowy.

November 1 is All Saints' Day, which traditionally began on All Hallow's Eve – now called Halloween – when the veil between worlds was believed to be its thinnest, honoring the martyrs and saints of the Christian faith. This year daylight saving ends on November 3, and Veterans Day (Remembrance Day in Britain) falls on the 11th. Hanukkah begins on the 27th, the day before America celebrates Thanksgiving. In the event you need a little taste of Britain over your long Thanksgiving weekend, November 30 is Winston Churchill's birthday. Why not raise a glass of Pimms to dear old Sir Winnie, the savior of Britain, who would be 134 years old this very year.

A Sir Winnie Sampler

Our five favorite Lord Churchill quotes, plus one for the holidays . . .

"A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on."

"A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject."

"Success consists of going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm."

Nancy Astor: "Sir, if you were my husband, I would give you poison."
Churchill: "If I were your husband, I would take it."

Bessie Braddock: "Sir, you are drunk."
Churchill: "Madam, you are ugly. In the morning, I shall be sober."

"You can count on Americans to do the right thing – after they've tried everything else."

"Even if something is left undone, everyone must take time to sit and watch leaves turn."
– Elizabeth Lawrence

November 2013

Arts Calendar

Jazz at CAM

11/7

11/1 Cook Off

5:30 p.m. Iron Skillet Chef Cook Off features top chefs from the Port City. Participating chefs include Kirstin Mitchell (Cameo 1900), Nick Votel (9 Bakery and Lounge), James Doss (RX), Keith Rhodes (Catch/Phun), and Ryan Andress with John-Mike Rehm of UNCW. Silent auction items available. Each vote costs $1. Every dollar donated enables the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina to distribute 5 meals. Admission: $10. UNCW's Warwick Center, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1465 or www.foodbankcenc.org/wilmington.org.

11/1–2 Haunted Attraction

6 p.m. – 12 a.m. Elaborately staged thrills, chills, and special effects. Not for the squeamish or kids under 13. New this year: lights on behind-the-scenes tours. Admission: $17–30. Panic Attack Haunted Attraction, 1290 South 15th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 578-3327 or www.panicattackhaunt.com.

11/1–2 Fright Night Dinner Theater

7 p.m. A creepy retelling of haunted tales of the Cape Fear region inspired by stories of the Ghost Walk of Old Wilmington and classic horror movies everywhere. Not recommended for young children. Doors open at 6 p.m.; show only option available. Admission: $18–38. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: www.theatrewilmington.com.

11/1–3 Celebrate New Orleans

Closing exhibit weekend for *Well Suited: The Costumes of Alonzo V. Wilson for HBO's Treme*. Events scheduled throughout the weekend, including the season premiere of Episode 1, Season 4 of HBO's *Treme*. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com/neworleans.

Ukelele Concert

11/21

11/1–3 Holiday Show & Sale

5–7 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Saturday & Sunday) Coastal Carolina Clay Guild's annual Holiday Show and Sale. Friday reception features live music by members of the Tallis Chamber Orchestra of Wilmington; proceeds from raffle benefit Empty Bowls and other community projects. Free admission. Hannah Block Community Arts Center, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: www.coastalcarolinaclayguild.org.

11/1–3 The Rocky Horror Show

8 p.m. A humorous, musical tribute to the science fiction and horror B movies of the late 1940s through early 1970s. Tickets: $23; $25. Thalian Hall, Main Stage, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

11/1–3 Live Theater

8 p.m.; 3 p.m. (Sunday) *In the Next Room*, an outrageous comedy set in the 1800s at the dawn of the age of electricity. Written by Sarah Ruhl; directed by Nicole Farmer. Admission: $15–20. Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 367-5237 or www.bigdawgproductions.org.

Holiday Flea Market

11/22-24

11/1–3 Live Theater

8 p.m.; 5 p.m. (Sunday) The re-imagining of *Dracula*. Admission: $10–15. Browncoat Pub & Theatre, 111 Grace Street, Wilmington. Info: www.browncoattheatre.com.

11/1–10 Fair & Expo

5 – 11 p.m. (Monday – Thursday); 5 p.m. – 2 a.m. (Friday); 12 p.m. – 12 a.m. (Saturday); 12–11 p.m. (Sunday) Cape Fear Fair & Expo includes livestock exhibits and competitions, acrobats, horticultural contests, rides, children's activities, food, family fun and live entertainment. Admission: $5–20. Wilmington International Airport, 1740 Airport Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 313-1234 or www.capefearfair.com.

11/1–15 No Boundaries

Two-week international art colony on Bald Head Island welcomes eight visiting artists and seven artists from Wilmington's art community. General public invited on visiting days. Info: www.nbiac.org.

11/1–24 Thalian Production

8 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday) Wilmington premiere of the award-winning play, *Other Desert Cities*. Tickets: $25. Red Barn Studio, 1122 South Third Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 251-1788. Info: www.thalian.org.

11/2 First Tee Fundraiser

10 a.m. The First Tee of Cape Fear Future Generations Golf Tournament. Registration: $500/foursome. Porters Neck Country Club, 8403 Vintage Club Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 367-1450 or www.thefirstteecapefearregion.org.

11/2 Polish Festival

11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Authentic Polish foods and drinks, polka dancing, crafts, raffle, live and silent auctions, and a variety of entertainment for the children. Free admission. St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, 4849 Castle Hayne Road, Castle Hayne. Info: (910) 675-2336 or www.ststanpolishfestival.org.

11/2 Truck-A-Roo

4–8 p.m. A food truck cook-off featuring good eats from Bollywood, Catch, Poor Piggy's, Flaming Amy's, the Paddy Wagon, Tacos El Nene, and Webo's. Beer and wine for sale; live music provided by the David Dixon Trio and Signal Fire. Free admission. Sampling tickets: $15. Downtown Wilmington (parking lot at Water and Princess Streets). Info: www.truck-a-roo.com.

11/2 Leftover Salmon in Concert

7 p.m. The godfathers of bluegrass jam. Admission: $25–30. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

11/2 Reel Rooftop Concert

7–10 p.m. Soul, hip-hop and jazz by B-Walk and the WL2F. Complimentary appetizers while supplies last. The Reel Cafe, 100 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1832 or www.reelcafe.net.

Downtown Tree Lighting

11/29

11/2–3 Kite Festival

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Kids kite-making class, stunt kite lessons and demos, large kite displays and an auction. Free admission. Shell Island Resort, 2700 North Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8696 or www.capefearkitefestival.com.

11/3 Free Day at Airlie

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free admission on the first Sunday of each month. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

11/3 Food for Thought

11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Small-plate dishes from the area's top chefs served with brunch libations plus panoramic views of downtown and the Cape Fear River. Proceeds benefit New Hanover Public Library and the Community College. Admission: $25–50. Cape Fear Community College, 411 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6301 or www.cfcc.edu.

11/3 Free Day at the Museum

1–5 p.m. Free admission on the first Sunday of each month. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

11/3 Chamber Concert

2 p.m. Tallis Chamber Orchestra featuring harpist Christina Brier. Free admission; donations accepted. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 16 North 16th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-4578.

11/3 Chamber Music Wilmington

7:30 p.m. Focus on the Future: Rising Stars. The Attacca String Quartet performs Haydn and John Adam, and young Russian-American pianist Ivan Moshchuk, a Gilmore Young Artist, performs solo selections from Rachmaninoff and joins the Attacca for the Dvorak Quintet. Tickets: $26; student and military discounts available. Beckwith Recital Hall, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 962-3500. Info: www.chambermusicwilmington.org.

11/4–8 Art Exhibit

12–4 p.m. *Test City: Analog to Digital TV.* Group exhibit exploring Wilmington's historic boob tube transition into 2008. Free admission. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-7958.

11/4–8 Writers Week Symposium

Visiting writers, editors and agents of local and national interest present workshops, panels and readings. Visiting writers include Brett Lott, John Jeremiah Sullivan, Tim Seibles, Lan Samantha Chang, David Wright and keynote guest, Natasha Trethewey, the current Poet Laureate of the United States. Ms. Trethewey will read from her work on Thursday, November 7, 7 p.m., at Kenan Auditorium as part of the Kathryn K. Buckner Lecture Series. Info: www.uncw.edu/writers/writersweek.html.

11/6–25 Native American Quilt Display

2–5 p.m. (Monday, Wednesday & Friday); 1:30–5 p.m. (Tuesday). Quilts created by local Native American communities on display in celebration of Native American Heritage Month. Cape Fear Community College, Wilma W. Daniels Gallery, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7619.

11/7 Kayak Trip

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Black River Kayak Trip. View the changing of autumn leaves, and some of the oldest trees in North America. Registration: $50–65. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/7 Junior Naturalist Program

1:30–3 p.m. Kids ages 6-11 learn about plants and animals living in the park. This week's theme: The Sly, Stealthy Fox. Includes hike to look for tracks and dens. Registration: $5. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/7 Jazz at the CAM

6:30–8 p.m. Live music from singer/songwriter Barbara Martin and jazz guitarist Vince Lewis. Tickets: $12/non-members; $8/members; $5/students. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

11/7 Lecture at the Bellamy

6:30–8:30 p.m. African American Life on the Bellamy Site presented by guest lecturer Madeline Flagler. The Bellamy Mansion Museum, 501 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

11/7 Acoustic Concert

7:30 p.m. Local favorite musicians L-Shaped Lot present a rare acoustic duo setup. Suggested donation: $10. The MC Erny Gallery at WHQR, 254 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1640 or www.whqr.org.

11/7 Shakespeare Club Film

7:30 p.m. A *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935). Admission: $8. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

11/7 UNCW Jazz Combos

7:30 p.m. Modern jazz forms in small improvisational settings. Admission: $5. Beckwith Recital Hall, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington . Info: (910) 962-3415.

11/7–10 Live Theater

8 p.m.; 5 p.m. (Sunday) The re-imagining of *Dracula*. Admission: $10–15. Browncoat Pub & Theatre, 111 Grace Street, Wilmington. Info: www.browncoattheatre.com.

11/7–10 The Rocky Horror Show

8 p.m. A humorous, musical tribute to the science fiction and horror B movies of the late 1940s through early 1970s. Tickets: $23; $25. Thalian Hall, Main Stage, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

11/8 Hope Ball

6:30 p.m. Diamonds and Champagne Hope Ball, an inaugural charity gala event to benefit Women of Hope. Dinner buffet served by the MOI Catering Co.; entertainment provided by the Craig Woolard Band. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: www.womenofhopenc.org.

11/8–9 Blue Velvet Musical

7 p.m. Concert dinner show and fundraiser featuring the original music of the new work-in-progress, *Blue Velvet the Musical*. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

11/8–10 Celebrity Golf Tournament

Willie Stargell Celebrity Golf Tournament celebrates the life of the great Hall of Fame baseball player and former Wilmington resident. Proceeds go toward eradicating kidney disease. Country Club of Landfall, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 859-9501 or www.countrycluboflandfall.com.

11/9 Southport Bike Tour

10 a.m. Historical Southport Bicycle Tour. Admission: $15–20. The Adventure Company, 807-A Howe Street, Southport. Info: (910) 454-0607 or www.theadventurecompany.net.

11/9 Exhibition Opening

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Monday through Saturday); 1 – 5 p.m. (Sunday) *Mail Call*, an exhibition organized with the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum that tells the story of mail and communication in the United States Armed Forces from the American Revolution to recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Admission: $4–7. On display through January 20. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearmuseum.com.

11/9 Lunch With Authors

11 a.m. Lunch with Carolina Authors, an annual Educational Foundation and Local Scholarship Fundraiser for Non-Traditional Women Students. Presenting authors include Emily Colin (*The Memory Thief*), Kevin Maurer (co-author of *No Easy Day*), Jason Mott (*The Returned*), and Ann Ross (the "Miss Julia" series). Admission: $28. UNCW Warwick Center, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: kcchandler53@gmail.com.

11/9 Oyster Roast

12 p.m. Southern style steamed oysters. Admission: $20. Proceeds benefit Royal Arch Research and Assistance, Inc., Cryptic Masons Medical Research Foundation, Knights Templar Eye Foundation, and Wilmington York Rite Masonic Bodies. Arab Shrine Club, 4310 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: www.wilmingtonyorkrite.com.

11/9 Contemporary Dance

7 p.m. Lionel Popkin Dance: *Ruth Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. Admission: $5–22. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: www.uncw.edu/arts.

11/9–10 Festival Latino

11 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Saturday); 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Sunday). Cross-cultural celebration that includes Latin America cuisine, music, dancing, kids fiesta, the Great Mexican Hat Race, plus crafts and information booths. Free admission. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0007 or www.amigosinternational.org.

11/11 Prologue

7–8 p.m. Join Ben Steelman of *StarNews* and Wilmington author Rebecca Lee for light refreshments and discussion of Lee's critically acclaimed collection of short stories, *Bobcat*. The MC Erny Gallery at WHQR, 254 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1640 or www.whqr.org.

11/11 Conservation Lecture

7 p.m. Dr. Daniel Pauly, the world's foremost fisheries scientist, presents "Sea Around Us." Admission: $10. UNCW Burney Center, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3285 or www.uncw.edu/presents.

11/11–12 Li'l Explorers Program

10–11 a.m. Stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes, and crafts for kids ages 2–5. Registration: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/12 Meet the Author

6:30–8 p.m. Henry Tonn will share selections from his first book, *Remembrances of Wars Past*. Free admission; copies of book available for purchase. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: www.nhcgov.com; www.henrytonn.com.

11/13 Fashion Show & Luncheon

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Holiday Splendor Fashion Show and Luncheon features a display of classy clothing, boutique shopping and raffles. Proceeds benefit Operation School Bell and other Assistance League Greater Wilmington philanthropic programs. Admission: $45. Cape Fear Country Club, 1518 Country Club Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 681-0162 or www.capefearcountryclub.net.

11/13 Snake & Turtle Feeding

4–4:30 p.m. Enjoy a brief presentation about the live animals on display in the Event Center and then watch them feed. For ages 3 and up. Registration: $1. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/13 Michael Franti & Spearhead

6 p.m. Hip-hop meets funk, reggae, jazz, folk, and rock. Tickets available at Gravity Records (612 Castle Street), Momentum Surf & Skate (5 North Front Street), and online. Admission: $35–40. Kids under 6 admitted free. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

11/13–17 Cucalorus Film Festival

Annual, non-competitive film festival showcases more than 200 films from around the world and draws 300 participating artists to Wilmington to share their work, celebrate film and connect with like-minded artists. Screening tickets: $10/regular; $15/premium. Downtown Wilmington. Info: www.cucalorus.org.

11/14 Birding Trail Hike

8 a.m. A 2-mile hike beginning at Greenfield Lake. Registration: $10 (transportation to the

park included). Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/14 Pro Musica Concert Series

7 p.m. North Carolina Guitar Quartet. CAM members and students: $5; Non-members: $10. Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, CAM, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

11/14–16 Holiday Market

6 – 8 p.m. (Thursday preview); 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Cape Fear Academy Holiday Market features nearly 60 vendors selling jewelry, home décor, gift items, clothing, accessories, children's items, baked goods, plus a small market of fine art. Admission: $5; children under 12 free. Sip N See Preview Party (adults only): $25/advance; $30/at the door. Cape Fear Academy, 3900 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearacademy.org/2013-holiday-market.

11/14–17 Live Theater

8 p.m.; 2 p.m. (Sunday) *Private Fears in Public Places.* Admission: $5–12. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500.

11/14–17 Live Theater

8 p.m.; 5 p.m. (Sunday) The re-imagining of *Dracula*. Admission: $10–15. Browncoat Pub & Theatre, 111 Grace Street, Wilmington. Info: www.browncoattheatre.com.

11/15 Fossil Odyssey

9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. A trip to the Martin Marietta Aggregates Quarry, which contains fossils ranging from 10,000 to 80 million years old. Steel toed shoes and hard hats required. Registration: $25. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/15 The Hunger Games

3–8 p.m. Games, trivia and prize drawings for teens and tweens (6–3 p.m.); Enter the grand prize giveaway to win movie tickets from *Carmkie* Cinemas by bringing canned food for the Wilmington Branch of the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina. At 6 p.m., revisit the thrill of watching the first movie based on the *Hunger Games* trilogy on the big screen. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: www.nhcgov.com.

11/15–17 Writers' Conference

North Carolina Writers' Network Fall Conference allows participants to mingle with writers from around the country and across the state at an event that includes master classes, readings, open mics, and manuscript critiques. Clyde Edgerton will present the keynote address. Holiday Inn Resort, 1706 North Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach. Registration: www.ncwriters.org/2013-fall-conference.

11/16 Walk to End Alzheimer's

8 a.m. (registration); 9 a.m. (ceremony) Walk to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (919) 803-8285 or act.alz.org.

11/16 Arts & Crafts Show

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Event features 35 local winners of juried show. Friends School of Wilmington, 350 Peiffer Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-0853 or www.fsow.org.

11/16 Artisan Craft Bazaar

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Local vendors sell handmade children's gifts, jewelry, art, clothing, bath and beauty products and more. Proceeds benefit Uganda Missions. Freedom Baptist Church, 802 North College Road. Info: www.freedombaptist.org.

11/16 Civil War Activities

10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Re-enactors with 1st Regiment North Carolina State Troops Company E on the site where the Battle of Forks Road skirmish took place February, 1865. Free and open to the public. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.battleofforksroad.org.

11/16 NC Symphony

7:30 p.m. North Carolina Symphony Orchestra presents Brahms' *Piano Concerto No. 1.* Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 962-3500. Info: www.uncw.edu/arts.

11/16 Beard & Moustache Mania

8 p.m. The Lower Cape Fear Beard and Moustache Competition features thirteen categories of beards and moustaches (including two female categories). Registration closes at 6:30 p.m. Proceeds benefit Prostate Cancer Awareness. Admission: $10. Front Street Brewery, 9 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1935.

11/17 Dance Showcase

2–4 p.m. The Dance Cooperative provides monthly informal showings to afford working artists a place to present works in progress to be reviewed and critiqued in a nurturing environment. Open to working choreographers, dancers and the general public. Donations appreciated. Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

11/17 Youth Orchestra

4 p.m. Wilmington Symphony Youth Orchestra Fall Matinee. Admission: $5. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/arts.

11/17 Choir & Chamber Concert

7:30 p.m. UNCW Choirs with Chamber Ensemble performance featuring Beethoven's *Mass in C Major, Op 86.* Admission: $5. Beckwith Recital Hall, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3415.

11/19 Big Read

2–3:30 p.m. Big Read Greater Wilmington invites you to read *The Things They Carried,* by Tim O'Brian, and participate in discussions and related events. Free and open to the public. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: www.nhcgov.com.

Natasha Tretheway comes for Writers Week 11/4–8

Fossil Odyssey 11/15

11/19 Holiday Marketplace

5–9 p.m. Landfall Foundation Holiday Marketplace is open to all Landfall residents, Country Club of Landfall members, and their guests. Variety of high-end vendors sell jewelry, home and holiday décor, children's toys, men's gifts, gift baskets, clothing, and more. Complimentary hors d'oeuvres will be served; cash bar or drinks by signature will be provided. Tickets: $20. Proceeds benefit greater Wilmington area non-profit organizations through the Landfall Foundation. Country Club of Landfall, Wilmington. Info: www.landfallfoundation.org.

11/19 Camera Club Meeting

7–9 p.m. Rebecca Taylor from the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society (FPHPS) presents photos from the FPHPS archives and talks about the upcoming photography project joining FPHPS and the Cape Fear Camera Club. Guests welcome. Cape Fear Community College, Building S, Room 002. Info: capefearcameraclub.org.

11/20 Live Theater

8 p.m. *Shakespeare on Trial.* A two-man performance perhaps inspired by the *Carol Brunett Show.* Admission: $14–50. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

11/21 Lecture at the Bellamy

6:30–8:30 p.m. John Haley speaks on the Emancipation Proclamation. Enslaved and free African-Americans built the slave building, main house and carriage house on the Bellamy property. Two years later, the Emancipation Proclamation freed American slaves. The Bellamy Mansion Museum, 501 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

11/21 Concert at BAC

8 p.m. An evening with Jake Shimabukuro, ukelele virtuoso. Admission: $30–40. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

11/21 Junior Naturalist Program

1:30–3 p.m. Kids ages 6-11 learn about plants and animals living in the park. This week's theme: "Let's Talk Turkey." Registration: $5. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/22 Fourth Friday

6–9 p.m. Free monthly self-guided tours of galleries, studios and art spaces, Downtown Wilmington. Info: www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

11/22 Gallery Reception

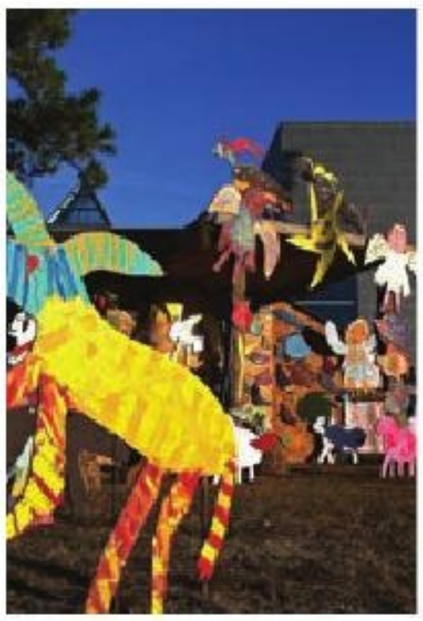
6–9 p.m. Quilts created by local Native American communities on display in celebration of Native American Heritage Month. Cape Fear Community College, Wilma W. Daniels Gallery, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7619

11/22 Party in the Pines

6–9 p.m. Grand opening of the Cape Fear Festival of Trees. Music, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, delicious holiday desserts, plus a chance to meet characters from the Wilmington School of Ballet's *The Nutcracker.* Tickets: $35/advance; $45. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

11/22 Gallery Reception

6–9 p.m. *Coastal Carolina En Plein Air.* The MC Erny Gallery, WHQR, 254 North Front Street, Wilmgton. Info: whqr.org.



Clyde at CAM

11/23

Food Drive

11/27

11/22–23 Animal Adventure

8 a.m. Adventure to Pocosin Lakes/Lake Mattamuskeet Nature Wildlife Reserve, home to thousands of tundra swan and snow geese. Pocosin Lake is home to the red wolf and red cockaded woodpecker (both endangered) and one of the largest populations of black bears in North America. Spend the night at the Eastern 4-H Center. Registration: $100. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/22–24 Holiday Flea at BAC

3–9 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday); 12–5 p.m. (Sunday) Vintage flea market that draws more than one thousand shoppers dozens of vendors from around the region. Expect vintage, retro and up-cycled treasures, plus food trucks, Grinder's Caffé coffee, and cash bar. Admission: $5 (good for all three days). Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 616-9882 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

11/22–12/8 Festival of Trees

10 a.m. – 8 p.m. A winter wonderland featuring holiday trees sponsored and decorated by local businesses and organizations. Proceeds from Tree sponsorships benefit Lower Cape Fear Hospice Foundation. Tickets: $12/adult; $8/group rate; $6/children; sales benefit CAM. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

11/23 Art for the Masses

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Artwork by more than 150 local artists available for purchase. Admission: $3. UNCW's Warwick and Burney Centers, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-7972.

11/23 Clyde at CAM

10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Collaborative work between internationally renowned artist Clyde Jones and children and families who paint these whimsical critters for the CAM Critter Creche. All ages welcome. No pre-registration necessary. CAM members: $3/child. Non-members: $5/child. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

11/23 Camellia Show & Sale

12–4 p.m. Tidewater Camellia Club Fall Show & Sale. Free admission. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 393-1803 or www.tidewatercamelliaclub.org.

11/23 The Arty Party

7–10 p.m. Join the Arts Council of Wilmington for a grand reception featuring a silent auction of exquisite artwork, entertainment by local performance artists, and a preview or the upcoming year. Tickets: $75 (includes heavy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails). The Cape Fear Room, Union Station Building, Cape Fear Community College, 502 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

11/23 Concert at Thalian Hall

8 p.m. Chicago-based singer-songwriter, Susan Werner. Admission: $18–35. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Box Office: (910) 632-2285. Info: www.thalianhall.org.

11/23–24 Printmaking Workshop

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Saturday); 1–4 p.m. (Sunday) Experimenting in Printmaking (Beginning and Intermediate). Experiment with monoprints, collagraphs, Plexiglas drypoint, and more. Cost: $100; $90/CAM members. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Reservations: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

11/24 Chorale Concert

4 p.m. Cape Fear Chorale Concert presents a special concert with an audience sing-along for selected choruses of Handel's *Messiah*, festive seasonal music and a premier of a new piece composed by Carl Nygard, Jr. Donations accepted. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: www.uncw.edu/arts.

11/25–26 Li'l Explorers Program

10–11 a.m. Stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes, and crafts for kids ages 2–5. Registration: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

11/27 Food Drive

Street Turkeys: Restock the Food Bank for Holidays is a food drive for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina at Wilmington. Requested items: frozen turkeys and hams; canned stews, soups, tuna, ravioli; peanut butter; cereal; canned fruit and vegetables; rice, pasta and dried beans; and infant formula, diapers, and wipes. See website for various drop-off locations. Info: www.street-turkeyswilmington.org.

11/27 Speak Easy

7:30–10 p.m. Community members are invited to spin an 8-minute story. Signup for storytellers start at 7:30 p.m.; stories start at 8 p.m. No notes allowed. Theme: "Equal and Opposite Reactions." Prize for best story. Free admission. TheatreNow, corner of Tenth and Dock Street, Wilmington. Info: www.theatrewilmington.com.

11/29 Anti-Black Friday

12–7 p.m. Live music, cold beer and artwork from Handmade Wilmington. Free admission; accepting donations for Venus flytrap conservation. Deeply Rooted Gardens, 6209 Carolina Beach Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-8035.

11/29 Downtown Tree Lighting

5:30 p.m. Event features music and caroling, a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and the lighting of the tree on the Riverfront at 6:25 p.m. Free admission. Downtown Wilmington, Riverfront Park, Water Street. Info: (910) 254-0907.

11/29–30 Enchanted Airlie

5–7 p.m. & 7–9 p.m. A self-guided, half-mile stroll through the gardens, featuring an array of festive lights and holiday displays. Santa Claus makes an appearance and local vendors offer coffee, hot chocolate, popcorn and more. Admission: $10–22. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: www.airliegardens.org.

11/30 Teddy Bear Picnic Brunch

8:30–10:30 a.m. Stay in your pajamas, grab teddy, and join the cast of the Wilmington School of Ballet's *The Nutcracker* for a special breakfast and story time with Santa Claus. Cost: $10/ages 3–12; $15. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Tuesday Cape Fear Blues Jam

8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Tuesday Improv Comedy

8 p.m. LitProve: Long Form Improv at Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

Wednesday T'ai Chi at CAM

12–1 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Thursday Yoga at CAM

12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. These sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants.Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Thursday CAM Public Tours

7:30 p.m. Explore the newest exhibits at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Friday Yoga at CAM

5:30–6:30 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. These sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

Saturday Farmers' Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artists and crafters. Riverfront Park, Historic Downtown Wilmington. Info: www.wilmingtonfarmers.com.

Sunday CAM Public Tours

2 p.m. Explore the newest exhibits at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.com.

To add a calendar event, please contact Ashley at ashley@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

Port City People

Pretty In Pink Foundation's Annual Pink Fashion Walk

Friday, September 13, 2013

Photographs by Ariel Keener

Amy Rowlett, Jacquelyn Rogers, Maggi Apel, Josie Skinner

Lynne and Jai Jones

Lane Cuthrell, Erin Riggs, Tina Ablang

Dr. Dana and Jennifer Shumate, Lisa and Joe Fitzgerald

Lauren Taylor and Trevor Welsh

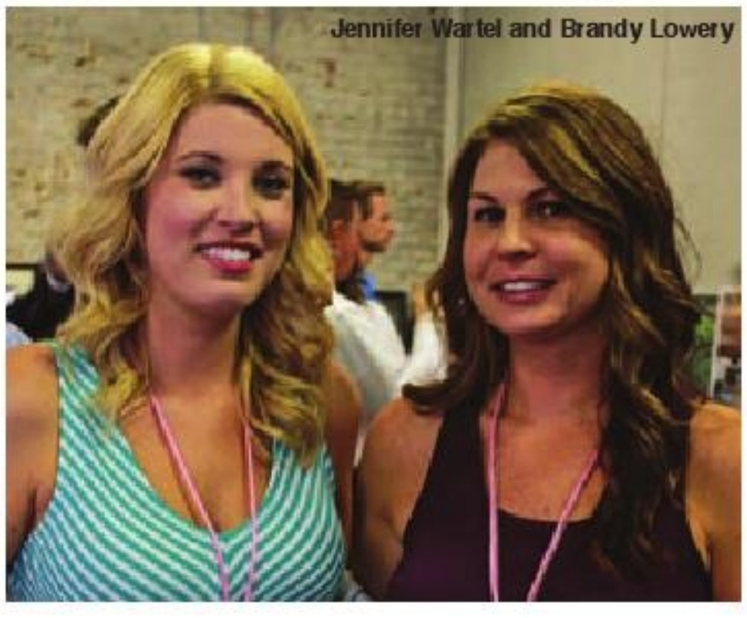
Gail Killman and Michelle Conely

Terry Allgood, Kimberly Brock, Kendall Fuqua, Penne Niemeyer

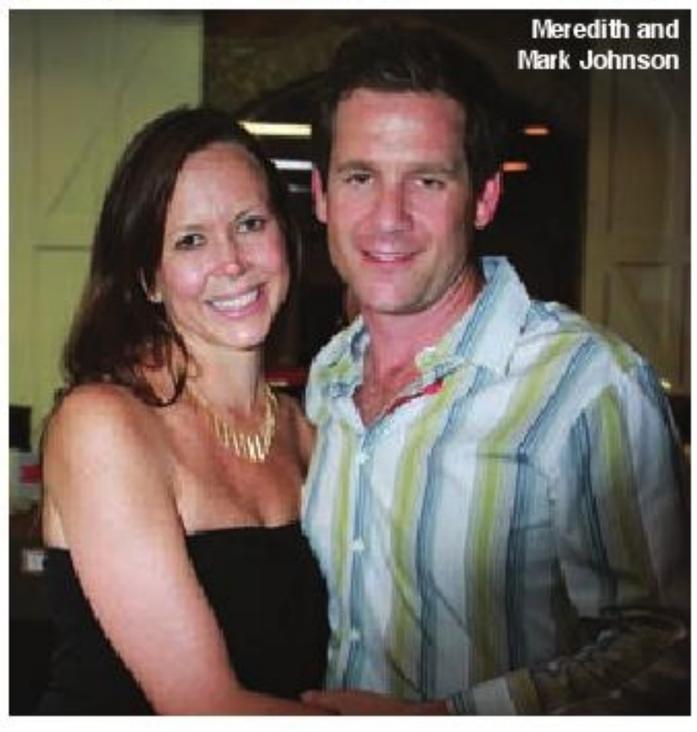
Jeff Gallo, Paul and Conney Jedrey, Rodney and Kathy Oaks, Kelly and Randy Fipps

Leah Sander, Kelsey Lawrence, Caty Dupuis

Susie and David Hartness with Lori and Dwight Manship



Jennifer Wartel and Brandy Lowery



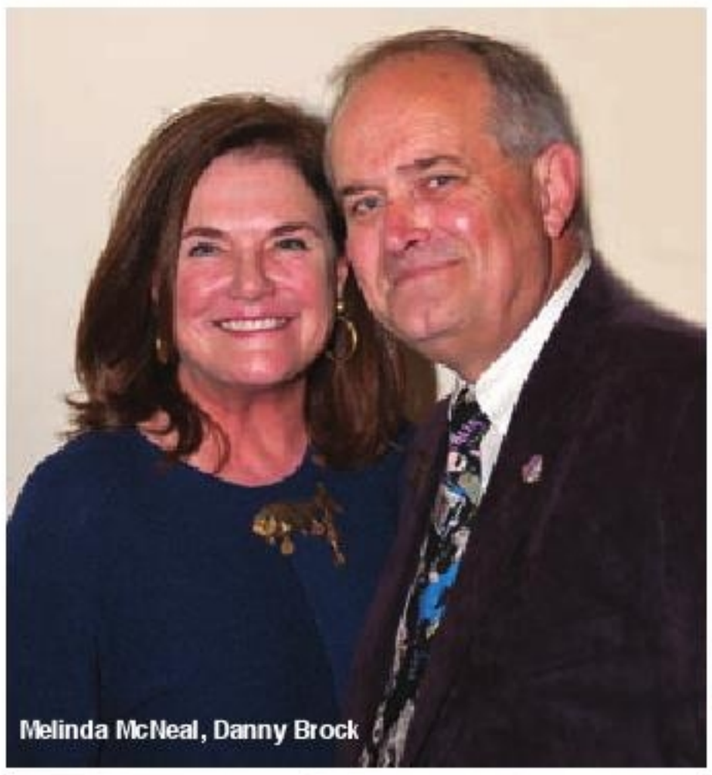
Meredith and Mark Johnson

Port City People

Thalian Association's 225th Anniversary Gala Reception at Thalian Hall

Saturday, September 28, 2013

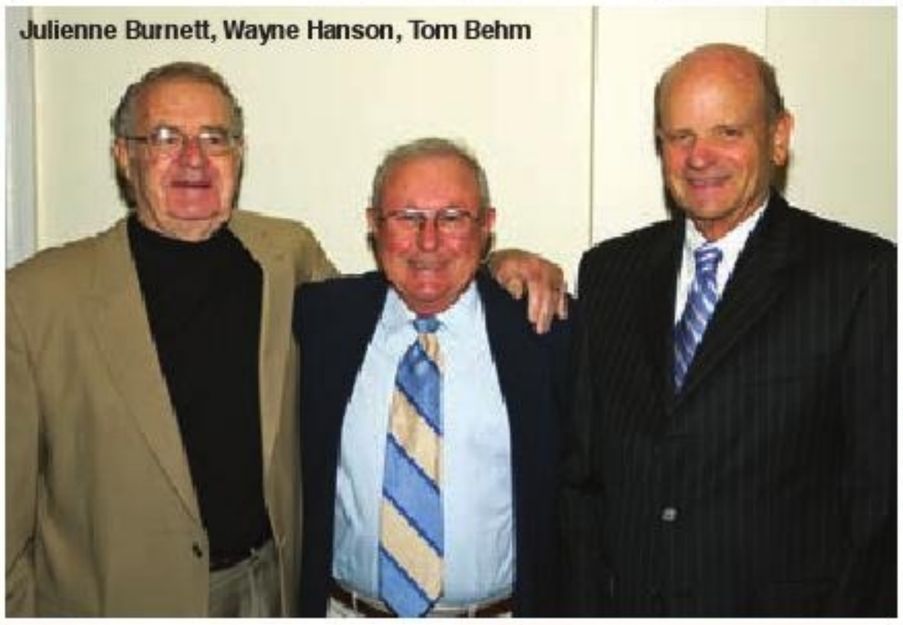
Photographs by Bill Ritenour


Melinda McNeal, Danny Brock

Donna and Kevin Green, Penny Pridemore

Sen. Tom Goolsby and Rachael Goolsby

Sylvia Hales, Suzanne Cavenaugh, and Ramona Warren


Julienne Burnett, Wayne Hanson, Tom Behm

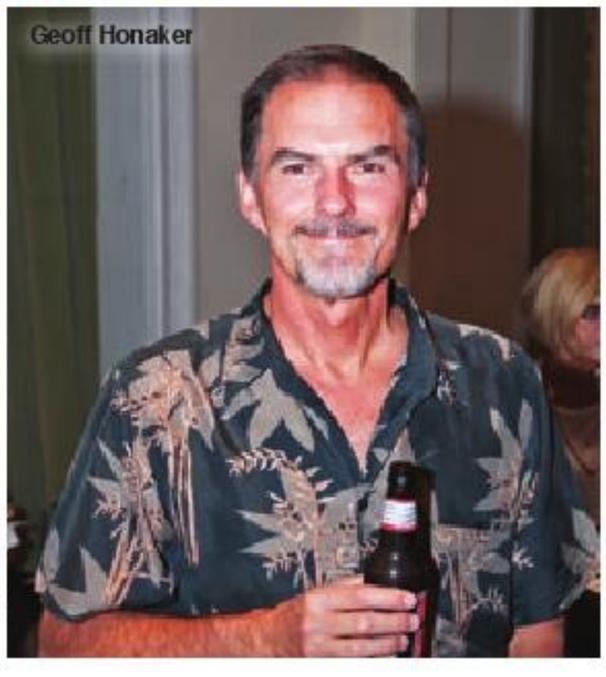
Vivian Parlier-Burnett and Lynne Moore Rhodes

Tom Briggs and Debra Gillingham

Jason Aycock, Katherine Rudeseal, Danny Brock, Troy Rudeseal

Kelly and Abigale Hawkins, Algernon Robinson

Susan Habas, Hugh Macrea II, Bambi Macrea


Geoff Honaker

Port City People

Corvette Show – Drive to End Hunger
Sunday, September 15, 2013
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Claude McDonald and Rossie Nance

Jim Williams

Janet and Doug Pizak

Charles Wilson

Wanda and John Cifelli

Bill Morris

Barbara Ditmore

Jeff Carland

Blair Poteate

Ron Wier

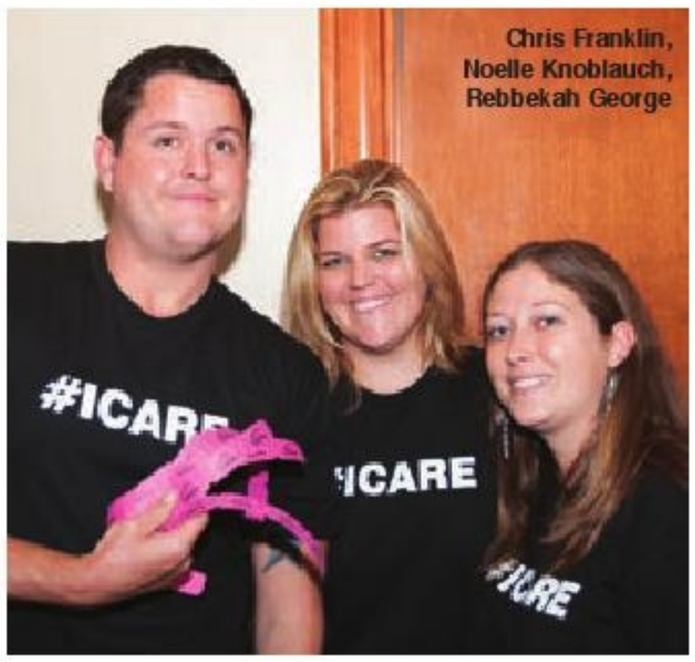
Bill and Gail White

Port City People

Care Project Gala
Saturday, September 21, 2013
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

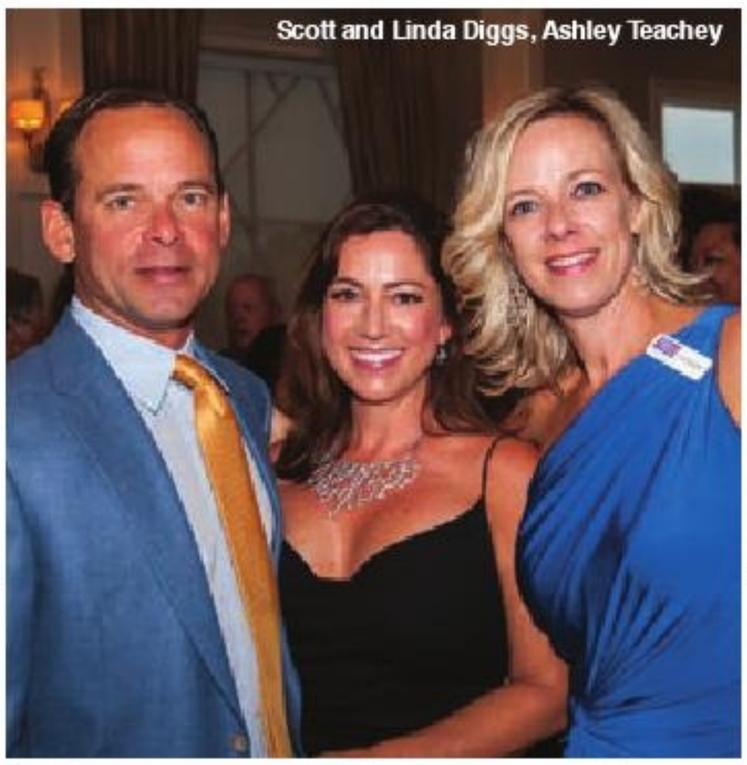
Julie, Tanner and Harold Hosley

Jessica and Matthew Register


Chris Franklin, Noelle Knoblauch, Rebbekah George

Jessica Metz and Rick Hernandez

Beverly and Truett Booth, Ellen Fauver, Savannah and Austin Stott


Scott and Linda Diggs, Ashley Teachey

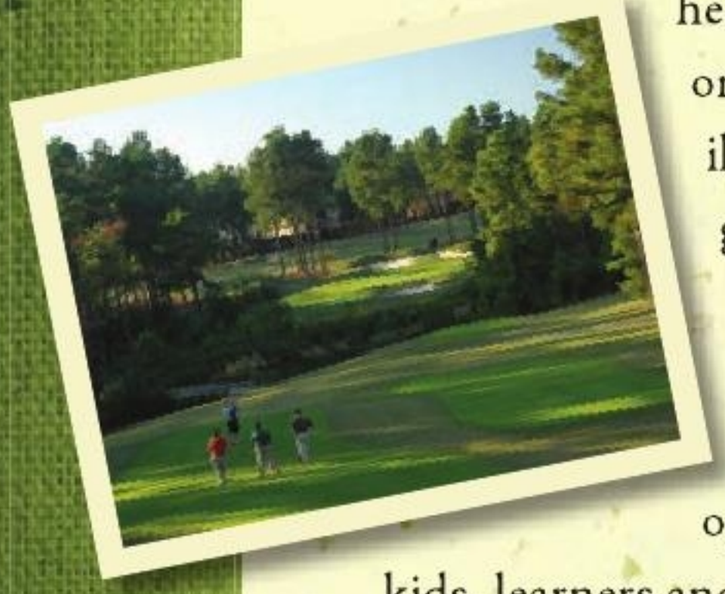
Stewart and Katherine Pittman, Britt Baker

Melody May and Angie Davis

Laura and Tony Michelakis

Brent and Dawn Williams, Wendy and Mark Carter

What does relaxation mean to you? Is it getting away or getting into something? Is it exertion or resting heart rate? Is it tasting something new or savoring tried and true? Is it a family hike or a wine tasting? The list goes on and on. However you define "relaxation," there is a place to find it in the Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen Area. We offer options for outdoorsmen, observers, kids, learners and shoppers. Relax your way.



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deercroft.com

What's Written on the Wall

By Astrid Stellanova

Beau has got a sense of humor but no intuition whatsoever. He thought I would actually enjoy a gym membership. That gift is right up there with a used vacuum cleaner. If Beau can't figure out how wrong that idea is, he can crawl right back into that Cadi-lacky and hit the highway – flashing rims and all. Which leads me to how we are moving into the season of giving and caring. Don't buy something they don't want just because you think it will make YOU look good.

Readers, I am rethinking my love life. Even gifted seers sometimes miss what's written on the wall.

Scorpio (October 23 — November 21)
If Scorpios are predictable at all (and yes, Mr. and Ms. Spider sign, you *are*), it is how much you enjoy a complication, er, drama, and how much you like a party. Nah, make that a *complicated party*. One Scorpio Mama orchestrated a birthday that required fourteen of us to drive 120 miles to meet at a country inn so we could spend an entire weekend carrying on and making over her. Like it was no trouble *at all*. If you put on your Big Boy and Big Girl pants, Birthday Spider, you will see it ain't that complicated to have a good time. *Celebrate*. Stick a candle in a Snickers bar. Somehow, don't ask *me* how, you made it to this ripe ole age. You got strange days November 1–3; better times by the 27th.

Sagittarius (November 22 — December 21)
Sagittarius would suggest sage, right? Nah. Here's what you got ahead: An opportunity is going to knock so hard even a deaf dog could hear it. Answer the door. It won't knock but three times in a lifetime, so crack the door and see what's waiting. There's a fascinating time around the 19th that could pave the way for a very nice time come Thanksgiving. Eat all the pumpkin pie you can hold, and just enjoy weighing your options right on till the end of the month.

Capricorn (December 22 — January 19)
If you come to the fork in the road, take it. (OK, I didn't make that up, but Yogi Berra did. It must'a worked in baseball.) Anyhoo, there is a situation with the stars that means decisions made last month were probably wrong, so rethink. Trust your gut — go back, reverse, whatever, to mix it up and fix it up. You have a very positive holiday time coming up, with a trine on the 30th that will make you glad you rolled with your gut and finally trusted the knowing and generous Universe. Or at least, had enough persimmon pudding and sweet potato casserole to expand yours.

Aquarius (January 20 — February 18)
You are probably thanking your lucky stars you heeded ole Astrid last month. Now you are living high. And I do mean, literally. Listen here: Alcohol may not be the answer. But it can sure make you forget the question. And the question was, all along, what exactly? You got to master yourself and get a grip when a shakeup happens at the month's start. But by the 22nd, you're high as a possum in a pine tree. Call it high on life or whatever you want to, but somebody's going to shake that branch and you heard it here, Honey.

Pisces (February 19 — March 20)
There's a lot of humility in anybody who invented hair spray but never took the credit for it. I met the original Hair Net guru, as a matter of fact, who is unknown but should have gotten a Noble or Nobel or Pulitzer — or whatever prize it is. I myself, for example, had a huge role to play in the development of the first hair-care products, but given I have a lot of Piscean aspects never said a peep to anyone till now. You feel like that — like your name should be on every can. By the 10th, a nice bit of recognition makes you feel like you own the prize heifer at the State Fair. But hey, fantasy works and reality don't, right? Wrong. Your real reward is still ahead. Hold tight.

Aries (March 21 — April 19)
Oh, my, fire sign. You've been about as subtle as the time you painted your house barn red just to tick off the neighbors. A fire extinguisher is about to become your best friend, Ram. So call your friends, simmer down and try to rein in some of that Aries aggression. If you can't be a wonderful example of anything, you can serve as a warning to somebody. Two strikes at the home plate on the 14–15th might have you skittish and worried about your job, so at least check the want ads if the bases are loaded, you are swinging and you ain't got nothing. Your mojo comes back on the 19th, sure as fire.

Taurus (April 20 — May 20)
The bull has got some explaining to do to those nearest and dearest. Yes, a bull can charge and scare the daylights outta everything else in the pasture. But outstripping a pack of mules, for goodness sake, is not exactly going to get you top honors and a gold star. For this month's lesson, Ferdinand, start out with new tactics in the barnyard, which include some four-syllable concepts: diplomacy, persuasiveness, and intuition. Trade brawn for brains on the 17th and concentrate on a Sure Thing Moneymaker that will bubble up.

Gemini (May 21 — June 20)
Let's just say for the sake of argument that them lights up in the sky really are UFOs, and your boyfriend/girlfriend really did plant a tracking device on your Ford, and your well water has arsenic in it. But this paranoia thing has gotta stop. Here's some tough love, straight from the *Good Book according to me*: Aliens do not want to study you, specifically, unless it is to figure out what you were thinking when you got that haircut. And odds are, your boyfriend/girlfriend is already dating again. And that funny taste is them old lead pipes. Drop them old fears and turn the Mother Ship around. The thing jarring you on the 25th ain't a laser beam from Mars: It's reality.

Cancer (June 21 — July 22)
Nice times on planet Earth for Cancer, huh? You got a real genius for Me, Me — and Me. Now what are you planning to give back? Try this: start *small*. Give away the last stick of gum in the pack. Hand that construction guy on the corner a cold drink. Help an old lady load her groceries. Tip the waitress another dollar. See where this is going? It ain't like we get one chance, or one holiday to be nicer to people. We get moments. So here's what else I see: Something got resolved at the start of the month, and was easy peasy by the 3rd. Playing nice is going to feel real natural. This cycle will continue — you getting, you giving, for two more years. Things could sure be worse.

Leo (July 23 — August 22)
You got fear and anger all confused. Fear is just false evidence appearing real. I read that on a fortune. Anyhow, righteous anger may be the only fuel you got. Don't get on Facebook and make a proclamation, just tell 'em yourself. Grandpa Hornblower, bless his heart, loved to climb up on a soapbox and blare away — the only point made was he was ticked. And he was outta Blatz. The clouds part on the 10th before a trine, and you get to stand in the sunshine and roar your fool head off, Leo.

Virgo (August 23 — Septeber 22)
Of all the things you lost, I bet you miss your mind the most. At least, that's how you feel because you are so used to over-thinking everything when you feel this good you wonder what bad stuff you've missed. This is one of those months that starts slow but ends up giving you a wild ride. You have got an opportunity to clear the room, and not because you had Taco Bell for lunch. I mean *psychic* room. Stop weighing everything ten times — you were right the first time. Trust ole Astrid, even if you doubt your own smart self. Coffee is a good diversion, anyhow, till you can drink vino and unwind.

Libra (September 23 — October 22)
Wheel and deal? That ain't exactly natural for a Libra, huh? Lord knows, Mama used to get confused and say, stop all that self-defecation. But we knew what she meant. This ain't Bank of America, and we ain't checking your credit score. You could try a little self-promotion. Toot your own horn, honey, and take credit where it's due. Everybody that knows you feels loyal to you — now turn that charm on a customer, or maybe a new client, and you are going to shine, Baby. Value yourself for a change and keep the change. On the 5th and the 10th deal with some money matters and don't be shy.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

The Family Portrait

If others could read their minds

PAINTING BY CLYDE EDGERTON

By Clyde Edgerton

Mother's Day, 1934. Mrs. Loretta Langley and her five sons pose. They can all, except for Mrs. Langley, hear the A.M. radio playing gospel music in the homeplace nearby. We may read their thoughts.

Left to right, standing:

1) I don't know why we didn't just do this in the living room.

2) I always wanted to be a mechanic, but Mama wanted me to preach. She about made me — once Donnie started selling houses. And so I got ordained. I tell people I reckon I'm Mama-called.

3) It's hard to be the best. I'm glad I went into real estate. It's been good to me.

4) Nobody knows how hard it is to be a mailman. But you do get to know things about people's business. And then there are the times Teresa Faye Needham invites me in for a bite to eat. She don't cut up her okra pod when she fries it. Thank God she's there by herself.

5) I'm glad I never told them that Daddy told Aunt Sis that I was his favorite. Sometimes it's hard not to say it.

Sitting:

1) Lord, this dress is hot. I don't know why we didn't just do this in the living room. Or at least under a durn shade tree. I might have this one blowed up and framed and hang it over there over the radio.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir, and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

CLIENT REVIEW

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PHOTOGRAPHY

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